

High Country News

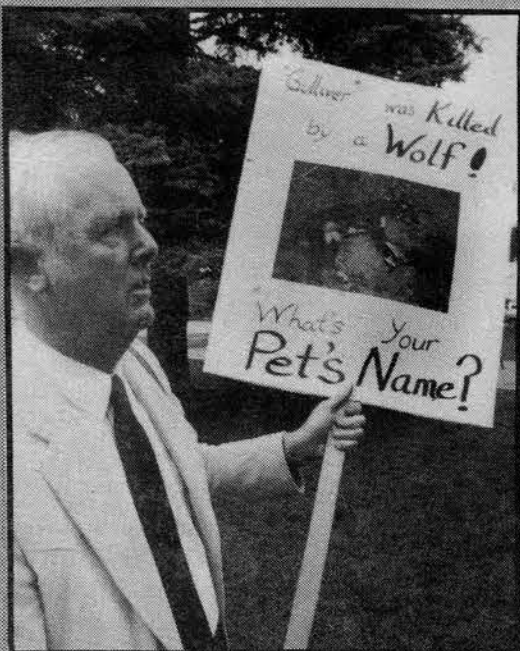
September 20, 1993

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A Paper for People who Care about the West

One dollar and fifty cents

INSIDE:



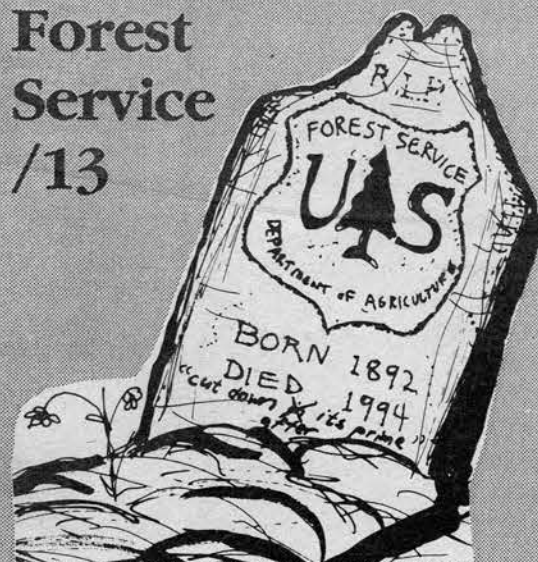
Dewey Vanderhoff

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Town Fights Its Designation As The Nation's Worst Superfund Site

TRIUMPH, IDAHO, TO EPA: *GET OUT*

1 Million Tons Of Waste From Silver, Zinc And Lead Mines
Are No Problem, Residents Insist

EPA Says Health Risks Demand Federal Action

by Steve Stuebner

TRIUMPH, Idaho — It's a picture-postcard setting here with 12,000-foot jagged peaks over a narrow, wildflower-dotted valley.

It's the scintillating vistas, and the quietude, that attracted about 50 mostly working-class residents to the old mining town of Triumph. It's also an affordable place that's set apart from the condos and glitter of Sun Valley.

But to step into Triumph today is like walking face-first into a buzzsaw. Residents are furious at an Environmental Protection Agency proposal to list their tiny town as a Superfund site, and they're doing everything possible to stop it.

Most of Triumph's residents are card-carrying environmentalists. They can't fathom why the EPA has targeted about 1 million tons of arsenic- and lead-laced tailings and a dozen residential yards for clean-up, when people have been living among the black heaps — without a single known case of cancer — for more than 50 years.

"I'm so green I'm chartreuse, and here I am fighting the EPA," said Wendy Collins, 48, a tailor who raised two children in Triumph. "I used to think the EPA was this great white knight that was going to clean up the world, and now it's become this monster working against us."

continued on page 10



William Cook

EPA workers test toxicity of tailings mountain in Triumph, Idaho



HIGH COUNTRY NEWS

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Dear friends,

The Browers inspire

Staff had two distinguished visitors in late August — David and Anne Brower, who are spending the year celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary. The only problem with the visit was the Browers' stamina — they kept staff up late each night discussing the problems of the world.

Formally, we had asked David Brower to visit Paonia to tell us how *HCN* could reach 2 million subscribers. He did his part. If we don't reach that circulation soon, it won't be because Brower lacked suggestions: publication of a "best of" *High Country News*, special retrospectives, editorials in each issue telling readers exactly how staff sees the West, and more urgency in the news columns about the state of the world.

Anne Brower sat in on the meetings, usually reading a book, but occasionally looking up to rein in David or to put what she considered to be a more realistic spin on his suggestions.

For the most part, the visit was intimate: staff and the Browers ate several meals together and spent a long workday discussing the paper. The one public event was an hour-long interview of Brower on the local public radio station, KVNf. Halfway through the interview, a car with three pleased-looking people pulled up in front of the studio. Catherine Cika and Stephanie Dubois of Page, Ariz., and Sarah Roser of Frostburg, Md., were passing through the area when they heard Brower being interviewed; so they came by to watch the interview in the storefront studio (KVNf is public radio with a vengeance) and to then thank Brower for inspiring them.

Brower, who says he's a terrible correspondent but a great talker, used the visit to argue with a letter to the editor that reader Gary S. McCaleb had published in the July 26 *HCN*. McCaleb quoted Brower as stating that "loggers losing their jobs because of spotted owl legislation is, in my eyes, no different than people being out of work after the furnaces of Dachau closed." That, said McCaleb, was "brutal arrogance."

Brower says he first used the analogy on Dick Cavett's TV show, after John McPhee's *Encounters with the Archdruid* was published. "McPhee was too modest to go on Cavett's show, so I went. His first question to me was: 'What do you say to people who complain that environmentalists cost people their jobs?'"

"My answer was: 'I suppose a lot of people lost their jobs when they closed the furnaces at Dachau.'"

Cavett was shocked and changed the subject, Brower said, but that hasn't stopped Brower from telling the story as part of the many talks he gives. "We don't need jobs that destroy nature and the earth. I thought that then, and I think it now. But I wasn't comparing the loggers to the people at Dachau."

It is dangerous to one's illusions to spend time with people you have admired from afar. But staff came away from the Browers knowing we had met a great man blessed with a wonderful, and wonderfully independent, spouse.

It was she who told us about Brower's passion for collecting golf balls on their walks near a golf course in their hometown of Berkeley, Calif. Brower now has several thousand balls, mainly because he, unlike the golfers, is willing to walk



Betsy Marston

Anne and David Brower in Paonia

through stands of poison oak to retrieve them. His biggest haul — 167 if memory serves — came out of the nest of a pack rat: "I found several gnawed balls, so I figure I did it a favor."

It is ironic that Brower, a tall, patrician man who could easily pass as a retired president of General Motors, is more interested in picking up lost golf balls than in hitting them down the fairways of exclusive country clubs. He and Anne live today as they have always lived — modestly — and we asked him if he had any regrets about not climbing some corporation's ladder.

"I apologize for the way I look, and I certainly have no regrets," was the answer.

Fall visitors

Roy Smith of the Bureau of Land Management in Denver came through on his way from a riparian management training course. Subscriber Rudolf R. Knirsch, a professor from Frankfurt am Main, stopped and told us about environmental education in Germany.

Four past and present Student Con-

servation Association members came by on their way to subscribers Rob and Hal-lie Cowen's wedding. They were Jay Satz and Meg Hafer of Westminster, Vt., Valerie Shand of Charlestown, N.H., and Jonathan Satz of Glenwood Springs, Colo.

Sam Hitt, who heads the Forest Guardians in Santa Fe, came in to talk about forestry. And Patricia Karlin and Ernie Eck, subscribers from Lawrence, Kan., also visited. A Paonia native, Lola (Fisk) Hickey, and her husband, Eldon, of Corvallis, Ore., visited. Lola, who works for Oregon State University, said, "Paonia still feels like home."

New interns

New intern David Frey comes to us most recently from Pennsylvania. During his trek across the midwest, he witnessed firsthand the effects of this summer's flooding, which sent him on detours around washed-out bridges and past drenched cornfields.

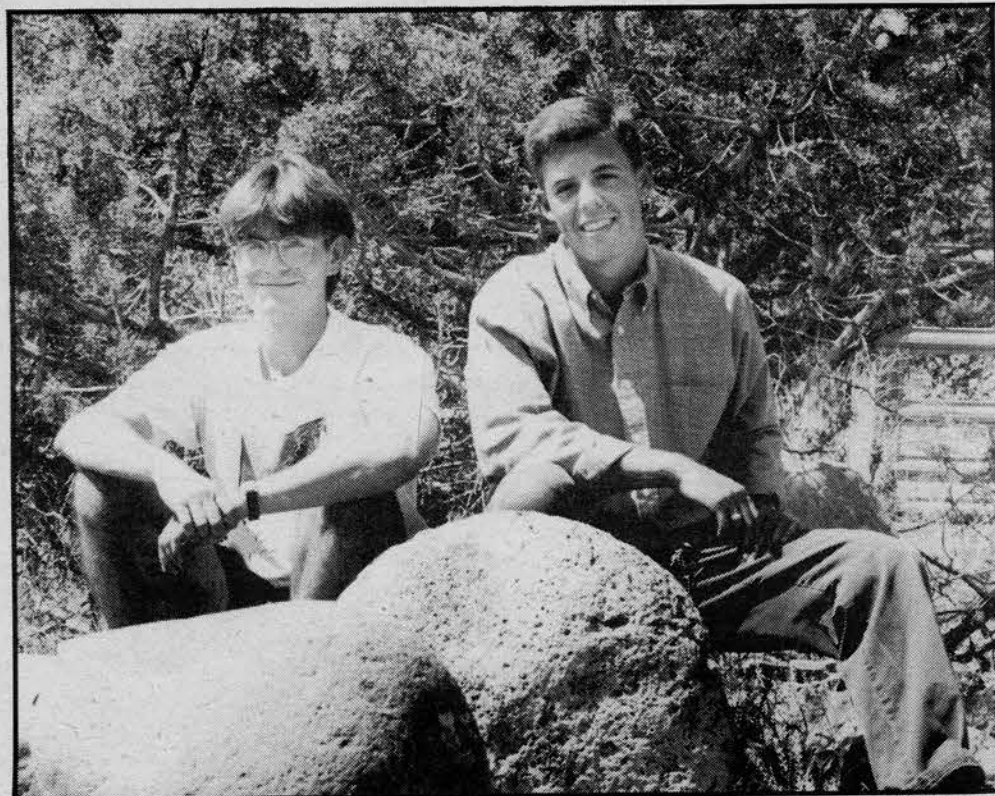
Dave graduated from Earlham College, where, sidestepping from his politics degree, he studied environmental issues in Kenya with former *HCN* intern Caroline Byrd. The experience gave him the opportunity to live and herd cattle with the Maasai people, taught him a lot about the complexities of land use, and cured him of his vegetarianism. He even drank blood from a freshly killed cow.

This is Dave's fourth experience beyond the hundredth meridian. He is pleased to be surrounded again by landscapes that make him feel insignificant.

Intern Todd Hinnen, a resident of Spokane, Wash., arrived in Paonia after a long drive through the crowded wonders of Yellowstone National Park and the Grand Tetons. He tells us his interest in environmental issues developed during childhood backpacking excursions into the mountain wilderness of the Northwest.

A recent graduate of Amherst College, Todd majored in physics and philosophy, a combination which he says provides him with an ample supply of intellectual subjects to contemplate but a limited supply of vocational possibilities. Todd remains an avid backpacker, snowshoer and telemark skier, and he tells us he looks forward to fall weekends in Colorado almost as much as his work weeks in the office.

— Ed Marston for the staff



Cindy Wehling

Interns Dave Frey and Todd Hinnen

WESTERN ROUNDUP

On this forest, multiple use is logging, and logging

RAPID CITY, S.D. — In the pine forests that surround Mount Rushmore, the Forest Service faces a crucial test of its commitment to manage ecosystems rather than tree farms.

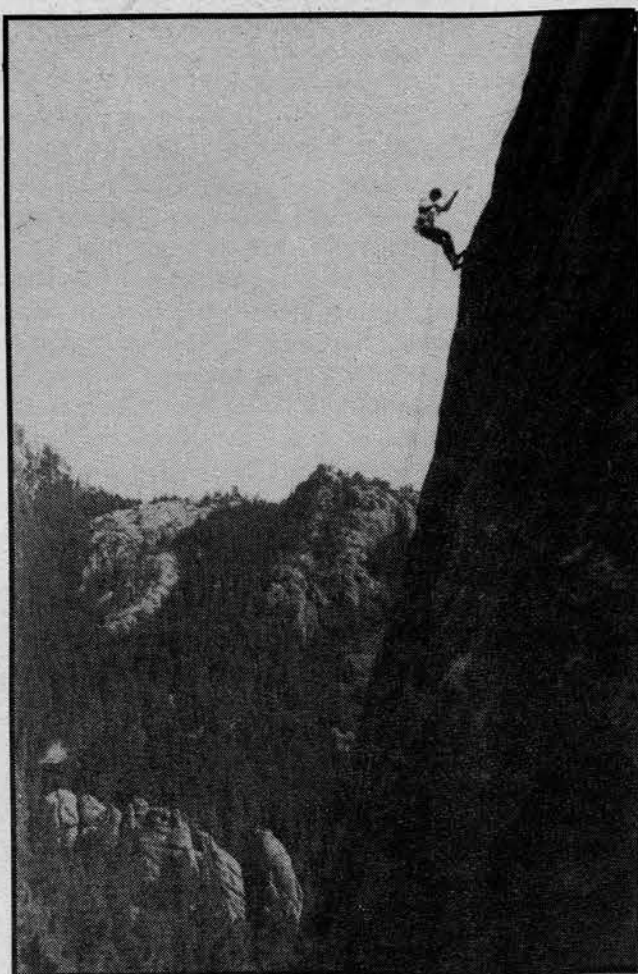
In 1983, the Black Hills National Forest was the first in the lower 48 states to adopt a 10-year plan for managing its resources. By the end of this year, it will be the first to issue a 10-15 year revision.

At the center of the debate is timber harvesting. Critics say the current plan supports timber harvest levels so high they destroy the forest's unique ecology. During the 1980s, timber harvests in the Black Hills increased nearly 50 percent, to 118 million board-feet in 1992. The 1983 plan for the 1.2 million-acre forest expected ever-increasing timber yields well into the 21st century.

"Timber is so heavily emphasized in the Black Hills that if this were an organism it would be a world-class freak," says Brian Brademeyer of the Black Hills Group of the Sierra Club. "Wildlife, wilderness — none of these are getting any significant emphasis. And the road system continues to grow," he says.

According to the Sierra Club, the Black Hills are sliced by 7,000 miles of forest roads, compared to only 1,500 miles of roads in the similarly sized Bighorn National Forest, 200 miles to the east in Wyoming. While the Bighorns have 195,500 acres of designated wilderness, the Black Hills have a scant 10,700 acres, less than 1 percent of the entire forest.

"The Black Hills have always been a problematic forest," says Dave Ode, a state botanist based in Pierre. "Historically, it's been managed solely for commodity production, and by the 1920s there were virtually no unlogged areas."



Tom Domek

A rappeller in Black Hills National Forest

Even if the Forest Service wanted to create a forest-friendly plan for the Black Hills, the agency probably could not offer a scientifically based management plan to do so. Despite being a national forest with the longest history of federal management in the nation — beginning with the first-ever government timber sale in 1899 — the agency has conducted little scientific research.

What is known about the area suggests that it is a forest unlike any other. Desert, mountain, prairie and even plant and animal species from the East all find a home in the hills, including Yukon columbine, a plant common in Alberta, and southern maiden-hair fern, which grows along canals in Florida and south Texas.

"What you don't have are the endemics (native species) that end up on federal endangered species lists and that are worth a lot of money to researchers," says Ode.

To fill some of the knowledge gap, The Nature Conservancy has proposed a Black Hills Heritage Inventory that would include a review of past biological research and the collection of new data.

"So little is known about how the forest

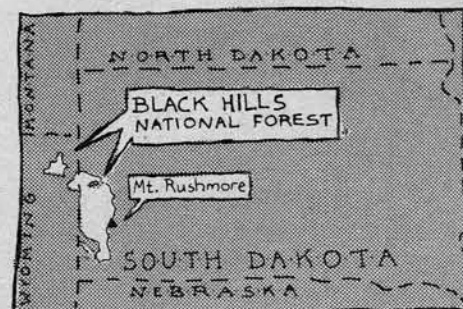
works and little is known about where the best pieces are," says Don Faber-Langendoen, regional ecologist for The Nature Conservancy in Minneapolis. "The forest management plan needs to include not just timber objectives but biodiversity objectives, and I don't think they're in a good position to address the latter."

The team leader writing revisions to the Black Hills forest plan disagrees, say-

ing that the government knows enough to craft a responsible management plan.

"Obviously we admit that more research needs to be done," says John Rupe, a forest planning analyst in the supervisor's office in Custer. "We're always going to want to know more. We're doing a balancing act, using all of the available research we have, which is a lot more than we had 10 years ago, and that's the whole idea of doing a revision."

Sam Clausson, chairman of the local



Sierra Club, says his group will likely go to court if the new plan fails to protect the northern goshawk and bald eagle. "We goofed by not appealing the 1983 plan," Clausson says.

But filing a lawsuit could be risky, he admits. If a judge temporarily bars the Forest Service from implementing its revised plan, the agency could fall back on its plan from 1983. The revised plan is expected by late 1993. For more information, contact the Black Hills National Forest, R.R. 2 Box 200, Custer, SD 57730 (605/673-2251), or Brian Brademeyer of the Black Hills Group of the Sierra Club (605/574-2651).

— Andrew Nachison

The author is a free-lance writer in Lawrence, Kansas.

HOTLINE

Tribes may take over Animas-La Plata

Hoping to keep alive the Animas-La Plata water project in Colorado, new Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Dan Beard invited two Indian tribes to take the lead on the project's environmental studies. If that works, Bureau officials say the Ute Mountain and Southern Ute tribes could become lead contractors to build the \$653 million water diversion project. The Bureau is looking for help because it is getting squeezed by lawsuits demanding more environmental studies on one hand, and by a water rights settlement deadline to finish construction by 2005 on the other. Officials with the Anglo water conservancy districts in Durango, and several Colorado politicians, endorsed the idea, but the tribes are still evaluating the proposal, says Southern Ute Tribal Chairman Leonard Burch. Lori Potter, attorney for the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund, which is suing the Bureau, warns that the tribes would be taking over a lemon. "Animas-La Plata has posed insuperable problems that the Bureau can't solve and we don't see how they expect other, much smaller entities to fix it," she says. In the meantime, the Legal Defense Fund and former Colorado state

water engineer Jerris Danielson have begun the first of several meetings in the Durango area to find alternatives to the giant water project.

Rancher acquitted in Montana

A jury acquitted an eastern Montana rancher of all but the most minor charge in a case involving the poisoning of eagles. Ranch workers testified in federal court that Paul Berger, 72, doped sheep carcasses with poison to kill eagles, which are protected by federal law. The *Billings Gazette* reported government investigators said Berger confessed to them: "Yes, I poison eagles ... they take my lambs. Here's my poison ... if you take my poison, I'll just have to buy some more." Former employee Tanya Jones said she saw Berger apply poison and shoot one eagle, and that she subsequently found more than 10 dead eagles around the ranch. Conducting both air and ground investigations of the area, federal agents discovered a restricted-use pesticide in two sheep carcasses, as well as in skunks and a magpie which had eaten the sheep. They also uncovered hawk and eagle carcasses, but the bodies were too decomposed to determine a cause of death. In his testimony, Berger denied the charges. Berger's attorneys said that the government conducted

its searches intending to cancel his leases if anything was found, and that agents denied the rancher and his wife access to neighbors and attorneys during the investigations. The trial lasted more than four days, and after 8 1/2 hours of deliberation, the jury found Berger guilty only of violating the Federal Pesticide Control Act. Defense attorneys said his maximum penalty would be 30 days in jail and a \$1,000 fine.

Campbell blocks Redskins

Colorado Sen. Ben Nighthorse Campbell, the only Native American in the U.S. Senate, says the name of the Washington Redskins football team is racist. Campbell, a freshman Democrat and a member of the Northern Cheyenne Indian Tribe, introduced a bill this summer that would block construction of a new \$206 million football stadium in Washington, D.C., unless the team changes its name. "Simply put," Campbell said, "the name 'Redskins' is offensive to Indian people. Whether it is considered offensive by non-Indians is not the issue." Campbell's bill, which is co-sponsored by Hawaii Sen. Daniel Inouye, a Japanese-American, would ban use of the stadium, which will be built on federal land, by any organiza-

tion using derogatory ethnic stereotypes, names or slogans. Washington's Mayor Sharon Pratt Kelly and city council endorsed the bill. But multimillionaire team owner Jack Kelly said nothing is wrong with the name.

Tree-spikers nailed

The first two people convicted under federal tree-spiking laws will spend time behind bars. A Spokane, Wash., jury convicted John P. Blount and Jeffrey C. Fairchild for driving bridge spikes into trees in Idaho's Clearwater National Forest in 1989. On Aug. 13, a U.S. District judge sentenced Blount, described as the ringleader, to 17 months in prison and three years on probation. His helper, Jeffrey C. Fairchild, received 60 days in jail with provisions for work release. The two were also ordered to pay \$19,639 restitution for damage to the trees. Plum Creek Timber Co. purchased the timber and used metal detectors at a Montana mill to catch the spiked trees before they were cut by sawblades. Blount says he will appeal his sentence. The convictions were cited by federal officials to justify a raid on an Earth First! camp on private land near Dixie, Idaho, Aug. 8. So far, Forest Service officers say they have found 30 spiked trees in the Cove/Mallard timber sales on the Nez Perce National Forest.

Rural Colorado county says it is being dumped on

"It was like those World War II movies where the little town gets invaded," says 58-year-old Madeline Daniels, whose property abuts the south end of the Central Weld Landfill in flat eastern Colorado. "Giant trucks filled with contaminated soil went by our house for a solid week."

The trucks came in 1991 from a demolition site in Denver, some 40 miles to the northwest. Daniels says contaminants from thousands of these loads dumped in the landfill show up now in her farm's irrigation well and a nearby river.

"One day you think you have this nice little place by the river with an organic garden," she says. "And the next you realize what you have been watering it with."

Daniels' alarm has turned into Waste Management's nightmare. The company bought the 22-year-old landfill two years ago and wants to operate it for another 12. But Daniels and a group of residents, known as the Ashton-Daniels Community Action Group, are fighting to shut the facility. Their battle has now landed in the lap of the Weld County Commission, which has the power to revoke the company's operating permit. Commissioners plan to make their decision at a hearing Oct. 13.

Madeline Daniels went to war two years ago, after her son noticed water in a nearby irrigation ditch that smelled like rotten eggs and looked like glue. When she and other farmers tested irrigation wells, they found elevated levels of heavy metals.

The group then began to investigate the history of the landfill. They found that the landfill's original operator had not filed with the state for a design and operations plan when the facility first opened in 1971. They also learned that the site received petroleum-contaminated soils and material from a variety of sources,

including the nearby decommissioned Fort St. Vrain nuclear power plant.

Even more disturbing, residents discovered that the landfill is unlined and dips below the water table in a spring-fed wetland that drains into the Big Thompson River, one-half mile away. When confronted, state and county health officials said past operators had dumped garbage directly into the groundwater without a discharge permit. "They should just close it and clean it," says Daniels.

But Waste Management Inc., has no intention of closing the facility. The company submitted a two-foot-thick document to state and county health officials April 1 outlining plans to add another 40 vertical feet of trash to the landfill over the next 12 years.

Waste Management and some state officials say residents' fears are overblown. "I think they're exaggerating some of the issues," says Bob True, a public information officer with Colorado's health department.

The health department's solid waste section leader, Glenn Mallory, says residents used "dubious" testing methods to find high levels of volatile organic compounds, chromium and other metals. Even if groundwater is contaminated, Mallory says, it may not originate from the landfill.

"This is a rural county where farmers spill diesel fuel, pesticides and other pollutants," he says.

Mallory does say that volatile organic compounds — some of which are known carcinogens — have shown up in groundwater outside the landfill's border. Waste Management discovered the contaminants while performing a hydrologic study of the landfill in 1991, shortly after it purchased the site. State and county health officials say the company was not required to test for VOCs under current law, but did so in anticipation of new, stricter state rules due this summer.

"In a sense, Waste Management almost hung itself" with its groundwater study, says Trevor Jiricek with the Weld County Health Department. "They took over a questionable site."

Bill Hedberg, who oversees the Central Weld Landfill for Waste Management, admits the site has "environmental and operational challenges," but says the company can engineer a solution. The company plans to introduce oxygen into the shallow groundwater in a process called "bubbling" to safely extract the organic compounds, he says.

Whether Waste Management is allowed to try its plan is now in the hands of Weld County commissioners. The commissioners will rely on state and county health officials for a technical assessment of the plan, says councilwoman Barbara Kirkmeyer. They will also consider whether the county needs Central Weld for its wastes, she adds.

Aside from the Central Weld landfill, the county has three recently opened landfills, with another three due to open shortly, according to county officials.

"I've heard people say that we have more landfills per capita than any county in the country," says Trevor Jiricek. Thirty percent of the Denver metropolitan area's trash ends up in the county, he says.

"It's market-driven," explains Chuck Cunliffe of the Weld County Planning Department. The county's open space is a magnet for Denver's suburbs, he says.

The battle over Central Weld pits not only farmer-activists against a corporate giant, but also county against state. Although state officials say they haven't fully evaluated Waste Management's plans yet, they seem to be leaning toward recommending a go-ahead.

The state's Mallory says shutting the landfill would leave a half-filled, open crater of waste that would only make drainage problems worse. "You can't just

walk away from it," he says.

But the county health department believes the state is letting Waste Management push it around while ignoring a potentially serious health problem.

In an April 26 letter to Glenn Mallory, county health director John Pickle criticized the state for quickly backing away from a proposed state regulation that would shut Central Weld down. In its original form, the regulation prohibited the continued operation of any landfill where trash is in direct contact with the groundwater. But after receiving a complaint letter Feb. 5 from Waste Management, Pickle said, the state reworded the regulation to exempt landfills where trash was placed into the groundwater prior to the regulation's enactment, using the company's proposed language verbatim.

"It's kind of a sticky situation where we are working against the state when we should be working with them," says Weld County's Jiricek. The county and the activists have gained some recent allies in their battle. The Colorado Geological Survey reviewed the landfill site this summer and concluded that the close proximity of the aquifer posed such a threat that the landfill should be closed within three years. And the state Division of Wildlife has recommended that leachate and contaminated water from the landfill be stored in closed tanks or lined ponds screened to keep animals out. The migration of contamination through runoff or groundwater "could have serious negative impacts to the fishery and wildlife resource in the South Platte Basin," wrote district wildlife manager Larry Rogstad in a letter to Weld County planners.

Members of the citizens' group hope this support will finally overcome the good ol' boy politics that has ruled Central Weld for more than two decades.

Toni Arnold, a student at nearby University of Northern Colorado who is assisting the residents, says the records show that the state and county approved the site contingent on the owner submitting a design and engineering plan. But the original owner never completed a plan and the state never demanded it, Arnold says. "It's you pat my back and I'll pat yours."

"I've heard that trash companies look for politically and environmentally naive counties to site landfills," says Anne Hayes, a mother of three whose kitchen window faces the landfill's northern border. "That's this county, period. The state thought the county was watching and the county thought the state was watching. Well, we discovered that nobody was watching."

The state is watching now, though health officials are sometimes exasperated by Daniels and her group's relentless efforts to close Central Weld. "I'm totally at a loss of how to attempt to deal with them," says Glenn Mallory.

One point everyone agrees on: Daniels' round-the-clock activism has changed what would have been a routine landfill expansion request into a full-scale battle.

For more information, call Sharon Schmidt with the Ashton-Daniels Community Action Group at 303/330-6901, or Bob True with the Colorado Department of Health at 303/692-3315.

— Adam Duerk, Paul Larmer

Adam Duerk is a former HCN intern. Paul Larmer is HCN assistant editor.



Michael Hayes reads a statement as the Ashton-Daniels Community Action Group opens a mock cemetery near the Central Weld Landfill

Matt Lubich/Johnstown Breeze

Oregon legislative session is a wash

The Oregon legislature didn't pass many environmental bills this session. But most Oregon environmentalists say that was a blessing.

With property-rights advocates dominating the Republican House and only a weak pro-environment margin in the Democratic Senate, environmental lobbyists faced tough challenges. Add to that a budget crisis spurred by property tax cuts, and the 1993 legislature looked bleak for existing environmental laws.

But by the Aug. 5 end of the record-breaking 207-day session, "it was pretty much of a wash," said Kim Middaugh of the Oregon Natural Resources Council.

The major bill environmentalists fought — loosening Oregon's strict controls on development of rural farmlands and forests — didn't entirely please Wise Use advocates either.

The original version of the bill, which Gov. Barbara Roberts, D, strongly opposed, would have gutted the state's 20-year-old land protection system by allowing widespread development on less productive "secondary" agricultural forest lands. The bill also weakened the land-use codes by leaving planning under local rather than stricter state control, critics charged.

A compromise solution, which Gov. Roberts says she will sign, allows some development on less productive farm and forest lands subdivided before 1985. Some forest lands would also be developable under a formula that considers the land's timber potential and existence of other nearby developments.

"We have mixed feelings about it," Kevin Kasowski, spokesman for the group 1,000 Friends of Oregon, said. Kasowski said the bill overturns state rules adopted last winter that weakened land protection. But he also said the bill, which 1,000 Friends of Oregon opposed,

is too generous to developers outside the densely populated Willamette Valley.

One aspect of the land-use bill that both sides agreed on is a "right to farm, right to forest" provision. The bill grants limited immunity to rural farmers and loggers from lawsuits that arise from traditional agricultural and timber practices. The provision would prevent newcomers to the country from suing their rural neighbors for industrial farm and forest practices, proponents say. But opponents say the bill will allow farmers to choke their neighbors with smoke from burning fields and allow loggers to clearcut small tracts of private forests in rural communities. Pesticide opponents dropped much of their opposition when the bill was amended to allow lawsuits for pesticide intrusions.

Some environmentally friendly bills did make it through the legislature. A proposal by the governor to set up voluntary local councils to protect high-quality watersheds passed with \$10 million in funding. The state hopes the money will draw in additional federal funds from watershed restoration programs in President Clinton's Northwest forest plan.

A \$10 million request to begin funding high-speed rail along the congested Portland to Eugene corridor was scaled back to \$4 million before passing just hours before the end of the session.

The governor's office also counts as a victory the protection of the natural resource department's budget from severe cuts pushed by some legislators.

Environmental lobbyists also helped quash onerous bills, according to Anna Goldrich of the Oregon League of Conservation Voters. A "takings" bill that would have required compensation for landowners who can't develop their property because of state regulations was passed by the House but killed in a Senate

committee. Other defeated bills would have weakened the state's endangered species laws and required legislative approval of proposed environmental regulations stricter than federal requirements.

Anti-environmental legislators also managed to kill a few bills. Despite the budget crunch, a bill that would have ended an expensive pollution-prevention tax credit program died in committee under intense industry lobbying. State regulators and environmental groups said the program wastes \$12 million to \$22 million per year.

A setback for environmentalists was the failure of a gas tax and pollution fees designed to reduce smog in the Portland area, said Jim Beard of the Oregon Environmental Council. A water rights bill that would have pushed conservation and wildlife protection died as a result of opposition from farmers and ranchers. Tighter pesticide reporting and liability standards also failed, as did a measure requiring truth in recycling labels. Business interests managed to pass a bill that delays until 1996 enforcement of a 1991 state law requiring 25 percent recycled content for plastic containers.

The contentious session spawned a debate about future legislatures. Middaugh of the Natural Resources Council predicts that the state's urban vs. rural, and environment vs. property rights split will improve as more people move to Oregon's cities. In the short term, however, the Oregon Environmental Council's Beard predicts that anti-environmental pressure will continue along with the unsolved budget crisis: "I think the next session will be worse than this year."

— Alan Pittman

The writer lives in Eugene, Oregon.

Foundation seeks to change Northwest

Though a lot of environmentalists talk about the need for radical changes in energy policies, few but Denis Hayes have the money and perhaps clout to make them happen.

A native of Washington state, Hayes' credentials are impressive: founder of Earth Day 1970 and international chairman of its 20th anniversary three years ago; graduate of Harvard Law School; professor of engineering at Stanford.

He's now set his sights on energy policy, challenging some deep-seated assumptions and taking aim at powerful interests, such as electric utilities and the Bonneville Power Administration.

Hayes' leverage is his post as executive director of Seattle's Bullitt Foundation, an \$84 million family trust fund flush with cash from the sale of a Northwest broadcasting empire.

Hayes has \$5 million a year to dole out to green causes in this corner of the country.

"If there's a group involved with fish or forests in the Northwest, we probably give them money," Hayes says.

Hayes, who grew up across the Columbia River from Portland in Camas, Wash., in a recent interview previewed the foundation's forthcoming energy strategies, revealing a preference for environmentally benign options like solar power.

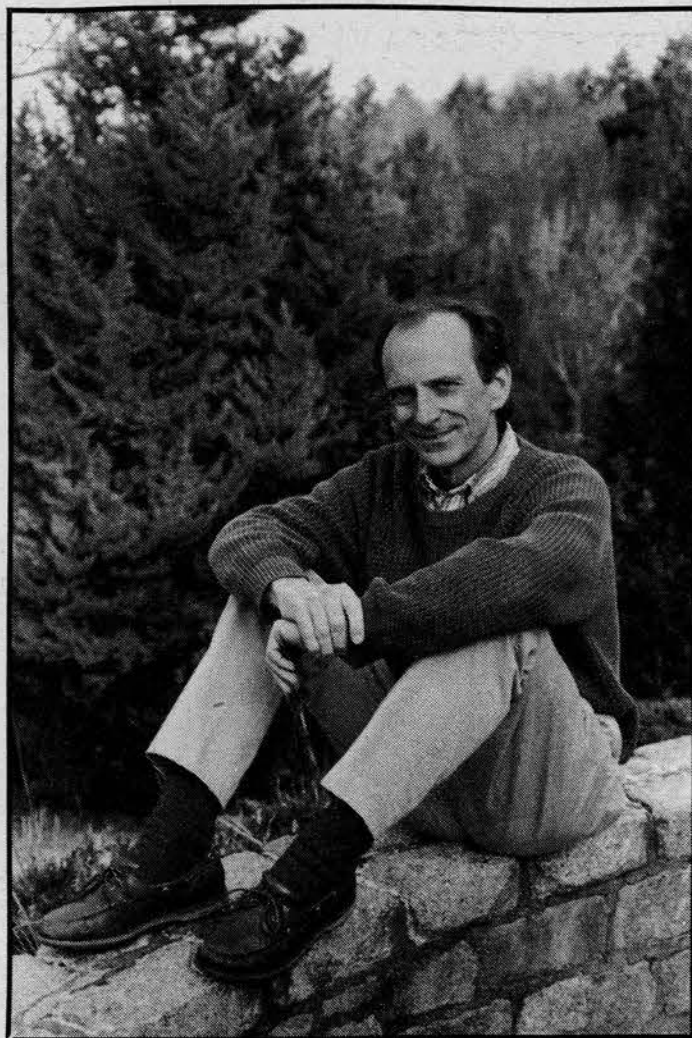
The most controversial aspect of Hayes' nascent plan is his insistence that the Bonneville Power Administration abandon its

preference for polluting energy sources. He says the Northwest's desire to protect its cheap power discourages conservation and investment in renewable resources.

Hayes' proposal will run headfirst into powerful political self-interests. But Hayes' attempt to raise provocative questions will be aided by the foundation's deep pockets and his credibility.

— Paul Koberstein

The writer works in Portland, Oregon. The Bullitt Foundation can be reached at 1212 Miner Ave., Seattle, WA 98101 (206/343-0807).



Denis Hayes

Therese Frare

HOTLINE



Al Hartmann/Salt Lake Tribune

Native American Barbie

What a doll

The blonde-haired, blue-eyed doll who has claimed a place in the hearts or toy drawers of millions of American girls has a new persona. Mattel introduced the dark-skinned, brown eyed "Native American Barbie" Aug. 3. The first Barbie, which burst on the market 34 years ago, had been given an Indian friend called Nia in 1990. But as one Utah doll collector told the *Salt Lake Tribune*, "Nia was not played up as Native American. Some kids just thought Nia had a better tan." Although Mattel says its American Indian Barbie is selling well, not everyone is pleased. University of Utah English professor Margaret Brady says the doll boils down 400 tribes into a "generic stereotype."

What's in a name?

Animal Damage Control, the federal agency attacked by wildlife advocates for its zealousness in shooting or poisoning predators, is changing its name. The shift to "Wildlife Services" is not cosmetic, said Bill Clay, an ADC director in Maryland. Clay told the *Albuquerque Tribune* that the problem with the old title was that it sounded "negative."

Reprieve in Montana

Facing stiff public opposition, the Bureau of Land Management has withdrawn 20,000 acres of Montana's Sweetgrass Hills from mineral development for two years. The move puts on hold Manhattan Minerals' proposal to explore the area for gold. A coalition of ranchers, Native Americans and environmentalists said exploration and eventual development would destroy the range's water quality and Native American religious, cultural and historic values (*HCN*, 8/9/93). "Since Manhattan Minerals' proposal, the public has provided new information about the area's significance for cultural resources and a variety of other issues," BLM Director Jim Baca told the *Billings Gazette*. The Sweetgrass Hills is considered a spiritual site by several tribes, including the Blackfeet, Chippewa-Cree, Gros Ventre, Sioux, Salish-Kootenai and Assiniboine.

HOTLINE

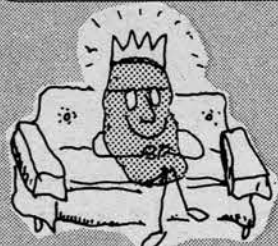
Nuclear waste is a terrible thing to mind

A worker at the Hanford nuclear reservation in Richland, Wash., had to be decontaminated last month after radiation penetrated his gloves. To test whether a waste tank was clogged, the worker had lowered a rock taped to a string into the underground pipe. When he removed it, the rock was dripping with radioactive sludge. Contractor Dick French was so infuriated that the employee and two co-workers were fired, and 47 others were sent home without pay, under orders to receive remedial training, reports AP. Accidents at Hanford aren't new. Earlier in August, a class to teach employees the difficult operation of activating a mixer pump in Hanford's most dangerous waste tank was called off when someone accidentally started the pump. Last spring, in a demonstration to the media of a machine that removes radioactive contamination from soil, employees were unable to turn on the machine. The chain of blunders has administrators looking for help from above. "The Lord has sent us a direct signal that business as usual is not going to cut it here at Hanford," said Assistant Energy Secretary Tom Grumbly.

Pulling out of CAP

In the native tongue of central Arizona Indians, Hohokam means "those who have gone." Now, central Arizona's Hohokam Irrigation District — farmed by non-Indians — has become the second district in the state to leave the elephantine Central Arizona Project. Stricken by low cotton prices and high water costs and debts on their CAP irrigation canals, the district's farmers opted to turn their rights to CAP water over to a half-dozen Phoenix-area cities. In return, the cities will pick up the district's \$35 million in debts to the federal government and private bondholders. The seven irrigation districts remaining in the project are hardly out of the woods. The project's steep price, \$60 an acre-foot of water compared to \$25 to \$30 for groundwater pumping, has held down their use of CAP water. Come Oct. 1, the CAP price will rise another \$22.50, and they'll have to start paying for the water whether they use it or not. Many observers predict that those districts then will drop out, too. Then the cities' CAP costs will eventually skyrocket, with fewer users left to pay the project's bills. A governor's task force has spent months debating solutions, such as taxing city residents to prop up farms and leasing water out of state.

BARBS

**Royal couch potato.**

Aspen's second-palace owner, Prince Bandar of Saudi Arabia, equipped his \$26 million mansion with 100 cable TV outlets, reports the *Denver Post*.

Two Utah counties flee water project

Back in the 1960s and 1970s, when enthusiasm ran high, the people of Millard County, Utah, loaded their kids on school buses for the three-hour drive north to Salt Lake City to rally in support of the Central Utah Project.

Thirty years later, those kids are now adults, and in early July they voted 1,702-125 to secede from the still-unfinished water project. County residents say CUP has turned into a boondoggle and is nothing like the project their parents voted to support in 1964.

They are not the only ones frustrated by CUP's three decades of delays and rising costs. On Aug. 31, neighboring Sevier County passed a non-binding referendum to secede from the sprawling \$2 billion project, and back in March, five Sevier River irrigation companies voted not to buy CUP water. If the Central Utah Water Conservancy District allows the two counties out, it could eliminate the entire Sevier River irrigation unit and take central Utah out of the Central Utah Project.

The Bureau of Reclamation originally designed the project to capture snowmelt on the south side of the Uinta Mountains, in the Colorado River drainage. The water would then be piped under the divide to the Great Salt Lake and Sevier River basins via a complex network of reservoirs, tunnels and canals and power plants. Most of the water — some 100,000 acre-feet — would go to Salt Lake City and other urban areas along the Wasatch Front. Another 36,000 acre-feet would be piped south to irrigate farms in Millard and four other Sevier River counties.

However, only the municipal portions of the project are near completion. Moreover, the Bureau ran out of money in 1991. Under the CUP Completion Act passed last year, the state's Central Utah Water Conservancy District took over

construction and federal funding continued. But Utah's Sen. Jake Garn, R, only managed to save the expensive irrigation unit by agreeing to state cost-sharing, mandatory water conservation and environmental mitigation (*HCN*, 7/15/91).

Since then, the Central Utah district has been unable to come up with a solution that satisfies farmers in Millard County, who would use almost half of the project's irrigation water.

"We're still strong supporters of the CUP," claims Thorpe Waddingham, the water rights attorney for Millard County farmers. "But the CUP has steadily deteriorated from the 1970s to the 1980s until now in the '90s it's gone completely to hell."

While Western farmers have long enjoyed large subsidies from BuRec water projects, the CUP has been a net loss for the Sevier River Basin. Except for \$250,000 spent to repair an existing reservoir, and additional money spent on studies, nothing has been built, says Waddingham. But Millard taxpayers have put \$6.5 million into the project in the last 29 years.

Now, with the addition of the Intermountain Power Project to its tax rolls in 1990, Millard County is paying almost \$1 million in taxes for CUP. "We could fund our own water conservancy district for half what we pay into CUP each year," Millard County Commissioner Frank Baker says. "It's not a tough decision to pull out. We're five years late doing it."

Waddingham also points to a study he commissioned showing that as the CUP has been modified to meet the political demands of cities and environmental groups, Millard County's share of the water has steadily declined. Of 10,000 acre-feet of water to be dumped into the Sevier River for his county, Waddingham thinks only 6,800 acre-feet would ever

reach farmers' headgates. By using lasers to level their fields, and new irrigation technology, Waddingham says, his farmers can save that much water at a much lower cost.

Besides, he and other CUP critics worry, dumping new water in the Sevier River system will bring unwanted federal regulations and complicate an already delicate balance of water rights worked out along the river since pioneer days.

But the Central Utah Water Conservancy District warns it has the authority to reject Millard and Sevier counties' petition to withdraw. "It's going to cost them dearly to get out," says CUP board member Jerry Maloney. "It's not simply a matter of saying 'now the people have spoken.'"

Maloney, the CUP's point man on the growing secession movement, says neither county is likely to get past taxes back. Moreover, he says if the CUP board releases Millard or Sevier Counties from future taxes and numerous other contracts made over the project's 29-year history, it would unfairly increase costs for counties that remain.

"There's going to have to be some sort of buy-out," says Maloney.

To add to the turmoil, three smaller counties, Garfield, Paiute and Sanpete, in the upper Sevier River Basin, want to stay in the project. If both Millard and Sevier dropped out, however, the upper basin would be unable to receive water.

Maloney says the CUP board will hold public hearings in late September or October to sort out the winners and losers and come up with a solution that is best for everybody. However, he adds, losing the irrigation component of CUP at the 11th hour would by no means be a crippling blow. With the Wasatch Front experiencing unprecedented growth, local governments which already control most of CUP's water would like to snap up the Sevier River Basin's 8 percent share.

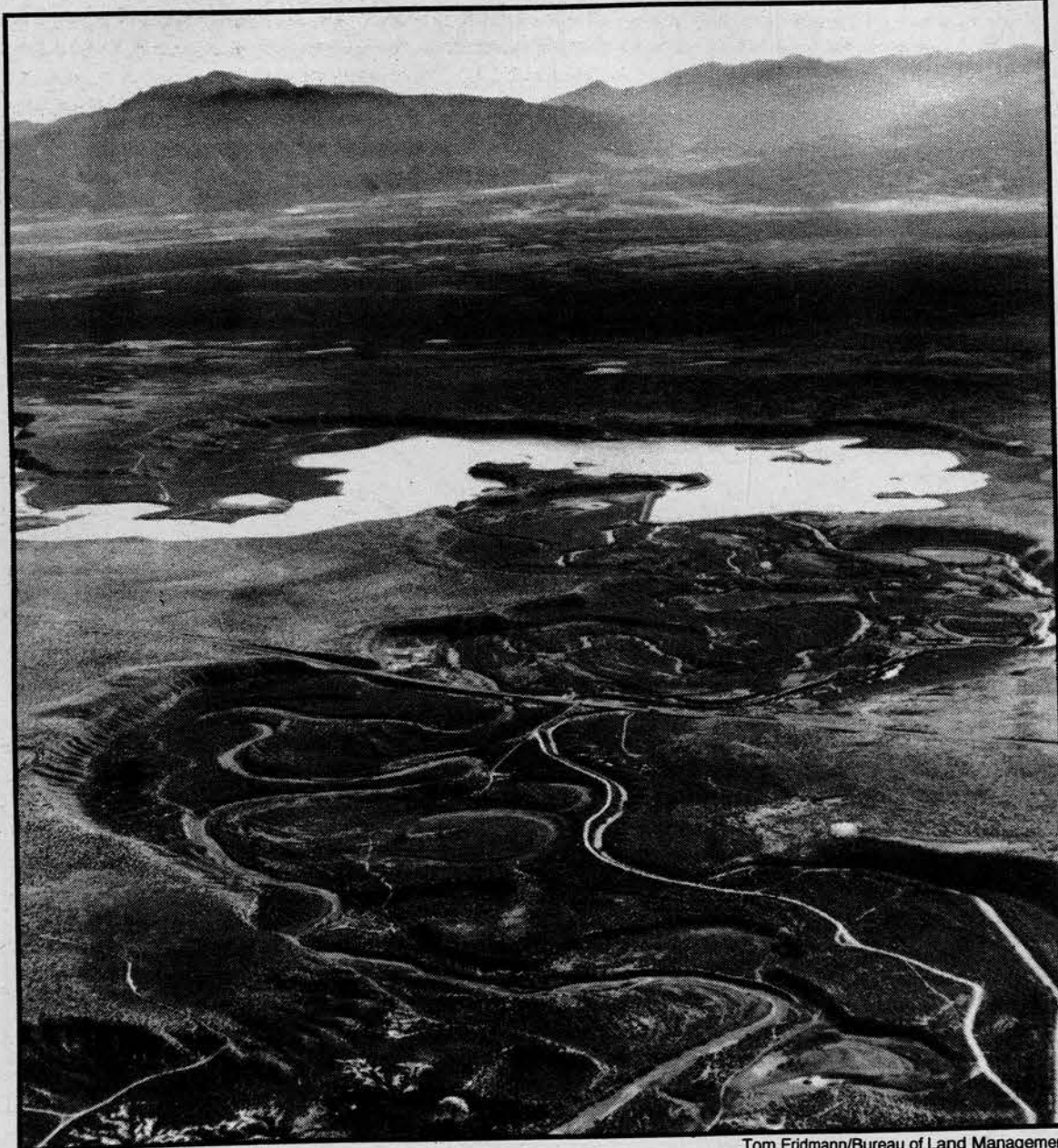
News of the farmers' decision to break out of the CUP after 30 years comes as no surprise to Utah environmentalists, who have fought the project for just as long.

"This is what we predicted," says environmental attorney Jeff Appel, who made sure a clause allowing the farmers to secede was included in the 1992 CUP Completion Bill.

"The lesson to the new Bureau of Reclamation, and to folks on other projects," says Appel, "is that the old Cadillac Desert idea of subsidized agriculture and a green West may not make sense anymore, even to the farmers."

—Larry Warren and Steve Hinchman

For more information, contact the Central Utah Water Conservancy District, 335 West 1300 South, Orem, UT 84058 (801/226-7100).

**The Lower Sevier River, part of the Central Utah Project**

Tom Fridmann/Bureau of Land Management

Forest Service proposals rile Arizonans

by James Bishop Jr.

VERDE VALLEY, Ariz. — Like many amenity towns in the legendary red rock canyon country of central Arizona, greater Sedona and Prescott are being invaded by seekers of a better quality of life.

A decade ago, land prices and the tempo of life were relatively quiescent, and real cowboys walked the dusty streets. Then came affluent retirees, actors, artists, writers and hordes of foot-loose businesses. The result has not only been startling increases in land and housing prices, particularly in Sedona, but a far more active citizenry, intent on hiking and enjoying the surrounding national forests — the vast Coconino and the Prescott — in which their small towns are located.

And there's the rub. These new arrivals desire participation in Forest Service decisions. But instead of participation, a surprising number believe they are only being placated by an agency that has increased its public relations effort without changing its mindset.

This has created mutinous grumblings from citizens who dwell near the Prescott National Forest in Prescott, and from those who live north, across Mingus Mountain, in the Village of Oak Creek in the Coconino National Forest near Sedona.

But the two forests are very different. On the Prescott, the Forest Service is planning to build a 100-unit campground for Winnebagoes in Granite Basin, a very gentle, undeveloped riparian area on the edge of the Granite Mountain Wilderness. The community agrees the present rustic camping area needs upgrading, but residents oppose the scale of the Forest Service plan.

There is no doubt about the public opposition. The public has created its own public process, packing meetings called by citizen groups with 100 to 300 people ranging in age from 20- to 80-year-olds. Despite this opposition, the agency has decided to go ahead with the proposal, and has received 41 appeals thus far.

On the Coconino, the agency wants to trade Jack's Canyon for land near the Mexican border and some riparian acreage on the Verde River that the National Audubon Society wants. Jack's Canyon would go to FLEX, a private real estate outfit that puts land trades together. Opposition to the loss of this land and the agency's secretive process has led to 3,800 signatures being gathered against the trade, out of 8,500 people in the area.

"It feels like colonialism," complains activist and teacher Leslie Glustrom of the Prescott forest's plans to open the cherished Granite Basin area, a half-dozen miles from downtown Prescott, to multi-million-dollar development. "The feds say, 'we know what to do and the natives be damned.' Forest Supervisor Coy Jemmett acts like he knows what's best without ever really engaging in serious dialogue with the community."

The story is much the same in the Village of Oak Creek, where hundreds of residents are fighting Coconino forest's proposed Jack's Canyon land trade through the newly formed Greater Sedona Conservation Group. Organizer Phil Shuper, a one-time California land developer, echoes Glustrom's grievance:

"Just when a local consensus is forming around the need for recreation, Coconino forest officials want to hand over nearly 200 acres of beautiful, wilder-

ness-accessible land to land speculators. We feel we're being exploited by bureaucrats far away who are just as isolated from the public as those inside the Washington beltway."

Ironically, just when the national forests in Arizona are beginning to shift away from logging and mining, the agen-

rock country.

The larger question is whether the Forest Service can convince taxpayers that it is interested in consulting them. What would constitute meaningful dialogue? For openers, Shuper says, Coconino National Forest consultants have reportedly appraised Jack's Canyon at \$18,000 per acre, yet acres adjacent to the projected trade are selling for \$40,000 and up. "When will it get a sense of the real market?" Shuper asks.

Citizens also ask why the Forest Service in Prescott and Flagstaff forbid public access to data regarding land trade decisions until after the agency's decision is made, and then allow only 45 days for appeal.

Many residents also see deliberate deception where the agency sees openness. When the Prescott forest went public three years ago with plans for Granite Basin, it dubbed the initiative a rehabilitation. But Forest Service critics say the supervisor obviously had in mind all along: a five-fold expansion of motorized campsites on the edge of a riparian wilderness.

In the absence of meaningful dialogue, Coconino and Prescott forest top-siders appear to have pulled off an amazing feat: They have transformed citizens who never bothered much with public affairs into fierce activists.

By any measure, the struggles between citizens and the Forest Service are far from over. "If I were to drop dead tomorrow," says Glustrom, who holds packed workshops on how to appeal agency decisions, "a whole host of folks would be there to fight to the end. We told the Prescott National Forest at the start that Granite Mountain was a special place, not to mess with it. And they didn't listen."

But they are listening now. At presstime, Forest Service regional officials in Albuquerque instructed Supervisor Coy Jemmett to put an indefinite "stay" on the Granite Mountain project. "This means," says Prescott activist Donn Rawlings, "that Prescott National Forest can't do anything until regional officials re-examine the process and the project." ■

James Bishop Jr. is a Sedona-based writer. His book on Edward Abbey, *Epitaph for a Desert Anarchist*, will be published by Atheneum in spring 1994.

For more information, contact Coy Jemmett, Supervisor, Prescott National Forest, 2230 East Highway 69, Prescott AZ 86301; Fred Trevey, Supervisor, Coconino National Forest, 2323 East Greenlaw Lane, Flagstaff AZ 86004; Granite Mountain Action, P.O. Box 1463, Prescott AZ 86302; Greater Sedona Conservation Group, P.O. Box 20501, Sedona AZ 86341.

REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK

cy's credibility with the citizenry here is no better than King George III's was with the citizens of Boston. "This time, we're the Indians," says publisher Morris Horowitz of the *Sedona Excentric*.

Forest Service official Steve Walker, staff planner in the Prescott National Forest supervisor's office, is amazed at the outcry. "We've gone beyond the call of duty, beyond NEPA requirements, in an effort to get input from the public," he said.

And Fred Trevey, the genial Coconino

Agency's indifference creates angry activists

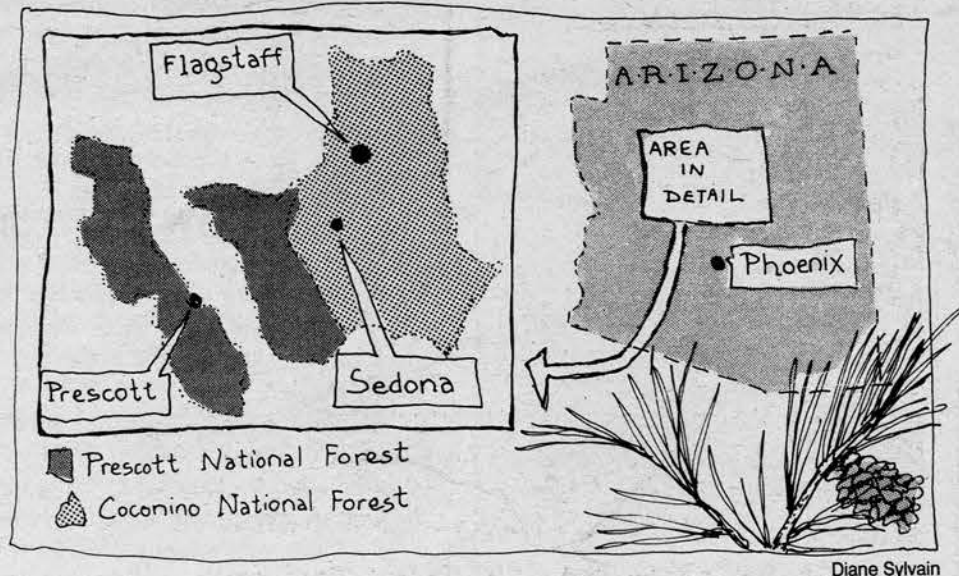
no National Forest supervisor, is also perplexed at complaints from Shuper's Greater Sedona group about lack of communication, becoming angry enough at one point to question the group's motives.

Things are so hostile that even Sedona's arch-conservative, pro-development *Red Rock News* warned Trevey in an editorial: "The black eye the agency will get by trading off Jack's Canyon does not seem worth the loss of public support."

Area residents, who shy from writing their senator and who wouldn't invite environmentalists to dinner unless they were the main course, are furious at agency bureaucrats for appearing to thumb their noses at them.

"There's not a left-winger within miles," Shuper says in response to Trevey's attack on the newly militant Village of Oak Creek citizens. "Trevey himself says this area is unique and deserves special attention. Which Trevey should we believe?"

A survey by Keep Sedona Beautiful found that 92 percent of the sample favored more open space and opposed trading any more public land out of red



HOTLINE

EPA cites Montana mine

A gold mine in Montana's Little Rocky Mountains that wants to double in size is illegally discharging pollutants from its current operation. The Environmental Protection Agency cited the Zortman-Landusky mine, owned by Pegasus Gold Corp., for discharging acid waters at seven unauthorized locations in violation of the Clean Water Act. Environmentalists, ranchers and residents of the Fort Belknap Reservation have united to fight Pegasus' plans to expand its mountain-top mine from 400 acres to 1,000 acres (*HCN*, 8/23/93). "This just validates everything we've been saying and warning about for the last three years," Roy Marble, an attorney who represents the reservation-based Red Thunder group, told the *Billings Gazette*. "It's just tragic that this was allowed to go on by the state agencies." The discharges are coming mostly from leach pads, where ore is stacked and soaked with cyanide to release the gold, and from waste dumps. The ores contain sulfides, which rust and bleed out during the leaching process and rainstorms. Wes Wilson, environmental engineer with EPA's Denver office, said the acid frees naturally occurring metals which are toxic to fish, wildlife and plant life. Pegasus and the state have 30 days to come up with a plan to solve the acid problem before facing possible fines, but the EPA's Wilson said it will be a difficult task. "These are huge parts of the mountain. You can't just shut it off outright."



Bob Zellar

Yellowstone after the fire

Baptism of fire

In the summer of 1988, 10 wildfires swept across Yellowstone, setting over 700,000 acres ablaze on almost one-third of the park (*HCN*, 12/19/88). Five years later, Yellowstone's recovery seems well under way. "The remarkable thing to me," said John Varley, head of the park's resource center, "is the resilience of this place," reports the *Billings Gazette*. One result of the tremendous heat generated was pine cones bursting open and sowing seeds for the forest's rebirth. Wildlife biologists say many animal populations have now returned to pre-fire numbers or higher. A sadder story concerns the moose, which depends on old-growth forests. Its habitat in the park destroyed, moose may not recover for another century since logging on nearby national forests has wiped out the oldest trees.

Snarls dominate lightly attended wolf hearings

Howls over bringing back wolves to Yellowstone seem to be growing a little fainter, if participation at three hearings in Wyoming is any indication.

Turnout at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-sponsored meetings held simultaneously in Jackson, Cody and Riverton Sept. 1 was much lighter than the agency expected. In Riverton, only 31 people testified on the proposal to bring wolves back into Yellowstone National Park and northern Idaho. In Cody — Yellowstone's east gate — only about 40 testified, but another 100 marched down Sheridan Avenue to protest wolves. Some 75 people testified in Jackson, but officials expected a much larger crowd.

Meetings held earlier in Montana and Idaho had similar turnouts, including just five people at the seven-hour meeting in Coeur D'Alene, Idaho, and 11 in Dillon, Mont., on the Yellowstone ecosystem's northwestern edge.

In early July, the Fish and Wildlife Service released a draft environmental impact statement on wolf reintroduction in Yellowstone and northern Idaho. The agency outlined a "preferred alternative" which provides for an experimental reintroduction of wolves into the areas by as early as 1994. The alternative would give game officials and ranchers leeway in managing the wolves, including permission to kill wolves that kill livestock (HCN, 7/26/93).

To gather public comment on its proposal, the Fish and Wildlife Service has sponsored three meetings apiece in Wyoming, Montana and Idaho. The agency plans 10 more in the coming weeks, including one in Washington, D.C.

Testimony at the hearings ranged from ranchers who completely oppose reintroduction to environmentalists who want wolves back but feel the agency's plan doesn't do enough to protect them.

But why such low public participation?

"My hope would be that people are thinking it's not a bad alternative," said Ed Bangs, team leader for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. "But I'm not sure that is what is happening."

Bangs said many people may be experiencing burnout over the issue or they may have already commented earlier. In 1992, the agency held more than 60 open houses and seven formal scoping hearings. Whatever the reason, testimony at the recent public hearings came from the more extreme sides of the issue, with middle-of-the-road people silent.

"It could be that some of the people who were kind of on the fence are now thinking, yeah, it might be kind of nice to have wolves," said Bangs. "At least that's what I'd like to think."

Betsy Buffington, based at the Sierra

Club's Sheridan, Wyo., office, agrees. "The debate has changed from if reintroduction will occur to how," she said.

While testimony at hearings has been light, 200 letters poured into the agency's Helena, Mont., office the day after Labor Day. The draft EIS comment period began in July and ends Oct. 15. Already, more than 40,000 people and groups have asked to be on the mailing list for the final environmental impact statement. Comments should be sent to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, P.O. Box 8017, Helena, MT 59601.

CODY, Wyo. — More than 100 people carrying posters covered with anti-wolf slogans such as "Wolves In Means People Out" marched down Sheridan Avenue here to protest wolf restoration in nearby Yellowstone National Park.

Jerry Kysar, the hunter who last fall shot a wolf that he says he mistook for a coyote, strapped on a guitar and sang against wolf recovery before a seven-hour hearing sponsored by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Sept. 1.

Wolves have been gone for 80 years from Yellowstone, and most of those at the hearing wanted them to stay gone. Arlene Hanson, leader of a group called the No Wolf Option Committee, said the gray wolf should be taken off the endangered species list.

"The notion people have of hearing wolves howl and putting the ecosystem back together is just a bunch of malarkey," she said.

A well-represented livestock industry echoed Hanson. Reintroduction of wolves into the park is akin to "inviting in the AIDS virus," said Dave Flitner, president of the state Farm Bureau.

But Lang Smith, representing the Bozeman, Mont.-based Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem Coalition, said a majority of the people in Wyoming and neighboring states favor reintroduction, and the agency should listen to that majority. Defenders of Wildlife representative Hank Fischer said he was surprised to

hear "so much misinformation" about wolves after 10 years of debate.

"We heard many of the same dire predictions in northwest Montana and none of it happened," said Fischer. "Livestock losses have been minimal, and there's been almost no land closures" to protect wolves, he said.

RIVERTON, Wyo. —

After a brief flurry of testimony early on, public officials passed the time reading newspapers while they waited for more people during a hearing here. A total of 31 people showed up, only three between the after-business-hours of 6-10 p.m.

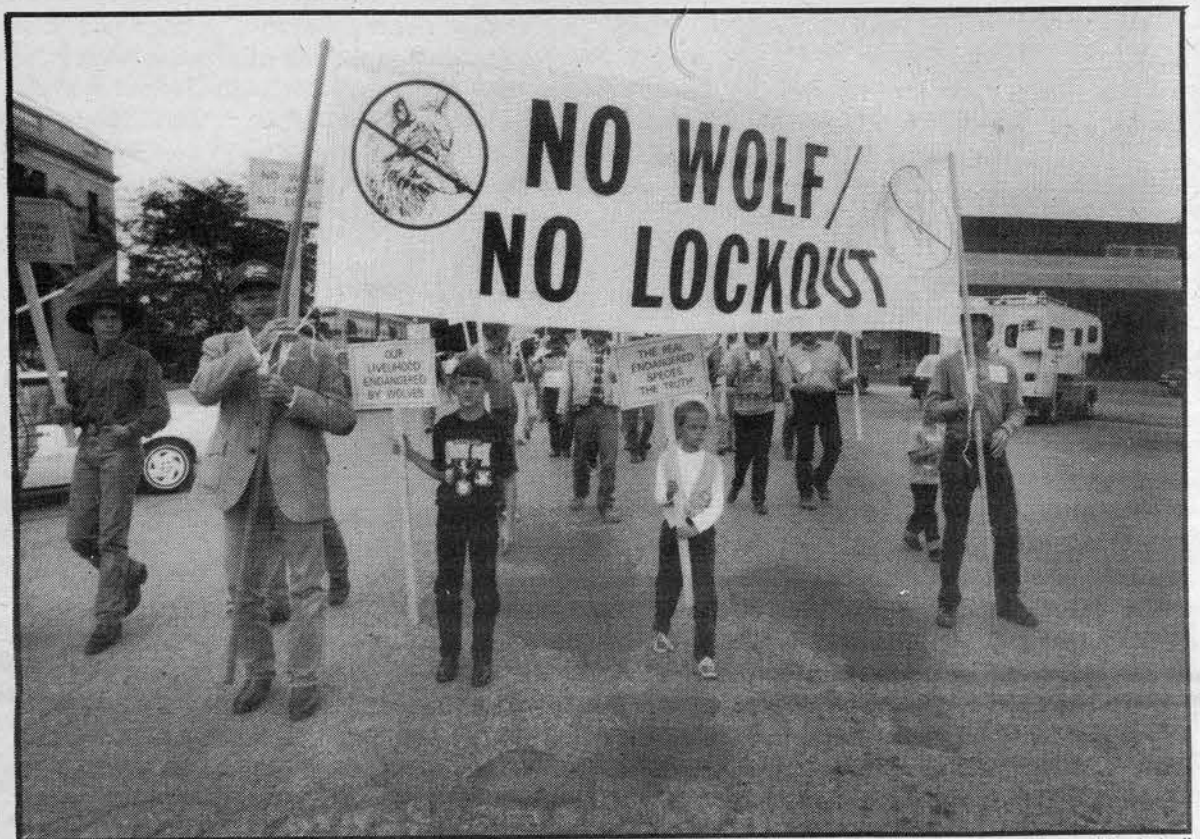
One person spoke in favor of the plan to bring wolves back on an experimental

because it continues efforts to appease livestock interests.

Wolf Haven, a Washington state-based group, touted an alternative that would heavily restrict activities in the recovery areas to give reintroduced wolves a better chance of survival.

Other groups, including the Sierra Club, the Greater Yellowstone Coalition, the National Audubon Society, The Wilderness Society and the National Parks and Conservation Association, have gone on record against the preferred alternative.

"It's outrageous that a plan to protect and recover the wolf would lessen the protection wolves currently have under the Endangered Species Act," said the Sierra Club's Betsy Buffington. The draft



Dewey Vanderhoff

Jerry Kysar, second from left, the hunter who shot a wolf near Yellowstone, was among more than 100 marchers at a Cody, Wyoming, rally against reintroducing wolves into Yellowstone

basis. Harold Schultz of the Wyoming Wildlife Federation said science and common sense should be used instead of "litigation and emotion."

"The experimental population is the best option because it gives some flexibility when the wolves leave the park — and they will," Schultz said.

Fremont County Commissioner Tom Satterfield said he saw no reason to bring back wolves to the area because strong evidence exists that the animals are already there. Satterfield also said he has seen no support for wolf reintroduction in his county and predicted dire consequences to the tax base of the region if wolves come back.

Pat Hickerson, a local sawmill owner and president of the Wind River Multiple Use Advocates, said wolf reintroduction "would be another nail in the coffin" of the timber industry because it would force the U.S. Forest Service to restrict further logging activity on its nearby forests.

JACKSON, Wyo., —

The Wolf Fund sponsored a pro-wolf rally here complete with a 100-pound captive-raised wolf named Koani before testimony began at a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service hearing.

At the hearing, Wolf Fund director Renee Askins supported the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's proposal to bring back the wolf on an experimental basis, calling it "a solution with compromises for both sides." She said she supports the plan

EIS allows wolves to be killed by private individuals and offers no protection of important habitat, she said.

Unlike the other two Wyoming hearings, wolf supporters in Jackson outnumbered opponents. Tom Segerstrom, a local wildlife tour guide, told fish and wildlife officials that his business has been "held back by the fact that we don't have wolves here."

Nor were all ranchers opposed to wolf recovery. Said Idaho rancher Ron Hughes, "If we're going to wage a war on parasites and predators, let's start in Washington, D.C."

— Tom Reed

Tom Reed free-lances out of Lander, Wyoming. Craig Welch of the *Jackson Hole Guide* and Bruce McCormack of the *Cody Enterprise* contributed to this report.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has scheduled more hearings to gather comments on its Draft Environmental Impact Statement on the reintroduction of gray wolves to Yellowstone National Park and central Idaho.

September 27: Cheyenne, Wyo.; Boise, Idaho; Helena, Mont.

September 28: Salt Lake City, Utah, Denver, Colo.; Seattle, Wash.

September 30: Washington, D.C.

For specific hearing locations and times, contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (406/449-5202).

Wolf killed in Montana

As some U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service officials fielded testimony on the agency's proposal to reintroduce wolves into Yellowstone and central Idaho, another found a wolf shot to death in Montana. Rick Branzell, a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service law enforcement officer, and University of Montana wolf researcher Kyran Kunkel recovered the 96-pound male wolf's body Aug. 28 just north of Polebridge, Mont., after picking up the "mortality signal" from the animal's radio collar, reports the *Hungry Horse News*.

"This is like Montana's version of a drive-by shooting," Branzell said.

The wolf is the second illegally shot in northwest Montana since May. Several wolf packs have established themselves there, and the fish and wildlife service has no plans to augment the population in that area.

Kunkel said the wolf was 3 or 4 years old and a likely candidate to break away from the pack and form a new one elsewhere. Branzell said he has several leads on suspects. If caught and convicted, the killer faces fines of up to \$100,000 and up to a year in prison.

LETTERS

GET A LEASH

Dear HCN,

After reading the essay written by Alison Baker in the August 9 issue, I was glad to read at the end that she has since moved to Oregon. She's exactly the type we don't need in Utah, but unfortunately, too many like her remain behind. Describing her walks with her dog in the foothills of Salt Lake, she writes, "The dog runs leashless ... and chased deer and rabbits and now and then a sparrow." As a law enforcement officer for the State of Utah Department of Natural Resources, I would like to inform her that not only is allowing a dog to chase wildlife or livestock illegal, but her dog can legally be shot for doing so. And due to their owners' ignorance and lack of common sense, many dogs do end up getting shot by our conservation officers each winter.

During the winter months especially, one of the major threats facing wildlife near urban areas is the presence of dogs who chase and harass the already weakened animals. In locations such as Salt Lake City, where we have insisted on building our homes right up the mountainsides, thereby eliminating wildlife's winter range, we have forced the animals to forage for what little food they can find in our backyards. Being forced to run through deep snow can easily cause death for these creatures, not to mention those that are unlucky enough to actually get caught by a dog. This was especially critical during this past extremely snowy year, when deer, elk and moose were regular visitors to the city. Where I live, on the "east bench" of Salt Lake, we had deer in our yard almost daily, and often saw elk just above us. And I've probably seen more moose in the past year than in the previous five put together.

Unfortunately, when spring finally came, we counted 39 dead elk and numerous dead deer right above our house.

Lotti Ann Wann
Salt Lake City, Utah

WEST AND LA SHARE
COMMON INTERESTS

Dear HCN,

In the Aug. 23 HCN, Jim Stiles worries about "sheer numbers of immigrants alone" moving from urban areas to the rural West, who will bring with them "congestion, pollution, crime and stress." In the same issue, Miles Corwin's article covers a seminar for L.A. residents to inform them on how to do exactly that. Peter Shelton's essay frets that "we're running out of places to move to," and "Will we ... acquiesce to the still-dominant presumption that if something can be done, marketwise in a capitalistic society, then it should be done?" Jim Stiles answers those questions in the negative: "Is there a solution to all this? Is there a way to preserve the West? Can we protect the resource and those precious intangibles? I think the answer is 'no.'" Stiles goes on, "the Real Enemy is the face we see in the mirror every day ... Humans and their toys ..."

This no-win, no-solution, self-defeating kind of analysis is the result, I think, of the narrow kind of regionalism for which, in fact, I like HCN. But I think there is a limit to the kinds of problems that can be solved by the regional thinking that HCN is good at. The loss of agricul-

tural land, rampant subdivision and unplanned development are, of course, wreaking havoc not merely in small towns across the West, but across the country and beyond. "White flight" from urban areas is a national trend as well. But the fact that these are national problems does not mean that those who are locally concerned need throw up their hands, and blame the Real Enemy in the mirror, as Jim Stiles suggests, or even more abstractly, "humans and their toys ..."

The demographic trends and economic shifts should be accounted for at the level of the political policies of our national government. Is our government and the politicians who run it so morally bankrupt that no one expects any solution to national problems from them?

For a provocative and in-depth analysis of "white flight" from urban centers, and the subsequent looting and burning of our cities by the federal government, see "Who Killed L.A.? The War Against the Cities," by Mike Davis in the June issue of *Crossroads Magazine* (\$3, P.O. Box 2809, Oakland, CA 94609). Davis describes in his article how Reagan-Bush policies (many of which have been adopted by the Clinton administration) have over the last decade made our cities intolerable and unlivable places. Davis documents how policies of succeeding federal administrations are turning our major metropolitan areas into wastelands of — how does Jim Stiles put it? — "Congestion, pollution, crime and stress."

Davis writes, "In the Reagan-Bush era the big cities have become the domestic equivalent of an insolvent, criminalized Third World whose only road to redemption is a combination of militarization and privatization. Otherwise, the Republicans have been absolutely adamant over the last 12 years in embargoing aid to the cities. Indeed, this de facto war against

the cities has been one of the great strategic projects of modern conservative politics, embodying profound electoral and economic objectives." Davis makes clear that Democrats share the blame: "Although Washington had twice invented 'fiscal emergencies' to sidestep Gramm-Rudman and finance the Gulf War and the S & L bailout, it simply 'yawned' in the face of the U.S. Conference of Mayors' urgent plea for a domestic Marshall Plan. ... Abandoned by the national Democratic Party to the ill winds of 'post-industrialism,' the big cities have faced massive federal disinvestment at the very moment that deindustrialization and the epidemics of the 1980s (AIDS, crack, homelessness, etc.) were imposing new financial burdens."

Why should HCN readers care what is happening to my hometown, Los Angeles? And the rest of urban USA?

Because the Real Enemy may not be the person in the mirror, and the real enemy might not be "the New Okies" either. Remember, the 'old Okies' fled from an environment which had deteriorated due to economic practices that were alleviated and turned around with the help of better federal policies. The cities of America do not need to be abandoned to deindustrialization, racist budget cuts and militarized policing in phony drug wars. HCN readers and their



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neighbors do have crucial things at stake in L.A., Philadelphia and New York.

If rural representatives to government vote for policies that serve the national interest instead of the local pork barrel, and allow American cities to recover from the Reagan-Bush onslaught, the rural West may be spared having to cope with the after-effects of "white flight," the flight of industry out of the cities, and the consequent spilling over of urban problems into rural areas.

If HCN readers see themselves perhaps more as citizens with shared interests with urban Americans, they might locate resources, allies and solutions beyond those provided by too narrow a regionalism. While you can expect the corporate media in this country to continue to portray inner-city people, especially people of color, as criminals and as the enemy of nice, white suburban families, the truth is we share common interests. There is no Real Enemy in the mirror in my home or yours.

Sesshu Foster
East Los Angeles, California

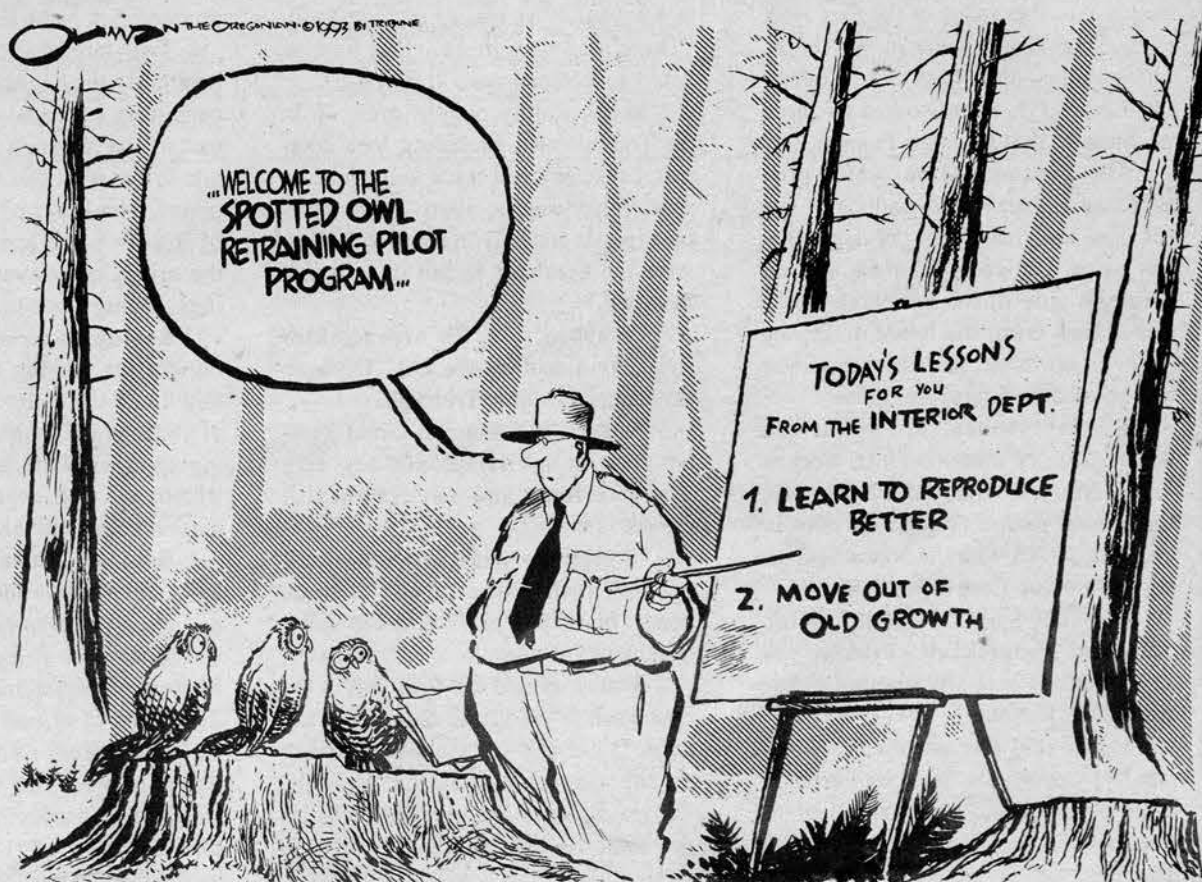
WINDSTAR CHANGED
LIVES

Dear HCN,

I worked with the Land Education Program at Windstar from 1983 to 1986 and want to respond to Jay Hair's assessment of the "old" Windstar (HCN, 8/23/93). His statement that it "didn't work" apparently considers only the foundation's financial self-reliance. There were obvious problems with the old Windstar on that level. The same could be said of space exploration or even universities. Each requires a subsidy. Windstar was fortunate to have a benefactor in John Denver, and he is to be commended for sponsoring the foundation as well and as long as he did. For Jay Hair to so rudely dismiss the work done on the land at Windstar since 1979 is unnecessary and arrogant.

I'm sorry that it "didn't work" for Mr. Hair. It did change the lives of scores of others, myself included.

Dale Will
Davis, California



Jack Ohman

Town fights Superfund designation ...

continued from page 1

Leading the charge against the EPA is Donna Rose, an art dealer and abstract painter who moved to Triumph in 1989 to get away from the neon glare of Las Vegas. She has spent \$30,000 and countless hours fighting the EPA.

To Rose, the EPA's case for listing Triumph as a Superfund site is baseless at best and sinister at worst.

"Our situation reveals everything that's wrong with the EPA and the Superfund program," said Rose.

Under the EPA's system for ranking Superfund sites, Triumph scored higher than any other toxic-waste site in the nation. A score of at least 28.5 is required for listing; Triumph scored 90.33. EPA officials base the scores on levels of arsenic and lead in residents' yards, toxic dust in the air, and heavy metals in the tailings piles. EPA contractors in two tests also recorded high lead readings in a 48-foot-deep drinking water well — tests which are still disputed today — and shut it down.

Arsenic is a cancer-causing heavy metal if ingested in sufficient quantities. Excessive levels of lead in the blood can cause subtle neurological disorders and learning disabilities.

EPA officials say that regardless of potential health risks to children playing in the dirt or people drinking from groundwater wells, the site would qualify for Superfund listing based simply on the threat it poses to the environment.

"Even if there weren't a single human being living there for 50 miles, the site would still qualify," said David Bennett, EPA National Priority List coordinator in Seattle. "We look at risk from a much bigger picture. We don't guarantee that someone will drop dead from cancer, we look at probabilities."

That's a key problem with the Superfund program, Rose said. Health dangers are not decisive in listing an area as a Superfund site, according to federal policy.



Steve Stuebner

Donna Rose overlooking the lower tailings pond and mine waste tailings. She sometimes windsurfs across the tailings pond.

"The priorities should be set according to the most acute health dangers," she argues.

Triumph residents and Idaho National Engineering Laboratory hydrologist Greg Norrell argue that the EPA and its contractor, Seattle-based Ecology And Environment Inc., botched soil and groundwater tests, which led to erroneous conclusions about environmental and health dangers.

Norrell and a Denver-based law firm that specializes in Superfund law have recalculated Triumph's hazardous-ranking score based on their own analysis of the relative health dangers. The result: 28.3, or two-tenths below the threshold of Superfund listing.

"It's so amazing to me that the EPA is ready to yank the soil out of a bunch of yards, pave over the streets and spend millions of dollars when they don't even

know if they've got a problem up there," Norrell said.

Bennett fumed at Norrell's allegation. "I don't think there's any question that there's been a release to the environment ... and there's no question that people are exposed," he said. "I mean we're the Environmental Protection Agency, not the 'Department of Energy/Build the Nuclear Bomb Agency.' I'd stand behind our scientist any day compared to them."

Several requests to develop and subdivide property in Triumph triggered a state environmental investigation of the Triumph area in 1988, at the request of Blaine County. That same year, the state Division of Environmental Quality conducted an initial site investigation and referred the case to the EPA's hazardous waste site unit for further investigation. In the summer of 1991, the EPA's con-

tractor, Ecology and Environment, conducted hundreds of tests, checking the level of heavy metals in the groundwater, air, soil and the tailings piles.

When EPA officials came to Triumph in October 1991 and told residents that they had dangerously high lead levels in their drinking water, and high arsenic levels in their yards, some residents panicked.

"For two months, I was sick over it," said Heidi Heath, a mother of two children, aged 4 and 7. "I thought, 'What have I done to my children?'"

But after Heath and other residents pored over the EPA data and learned, with the help of Rose and Norrell, that the health dangers were potentially overblown, her fears eased. "I feel 100 percent fine," she said. "I would never leave the area."

A number of Triumph residents and children submitted to urine and blood tests to determine the lead and arsenic levels in their bodies. The tests, conducted over three years, did not reveal any acute levels of lead or arsenic poisoning.

"It is true that the biological levels don't pose an imminent health threat," said Pat McGavran, supervisor of the state office of Environmental Health. "But they do have elevated levels of arsenic. There is an exposure and there is a potential for health problems."

A key point that Triumph residents raise regarding lead and arsenic exposure is that the ore worked in the Triumph and North Star mines was not smelted (heat-treated) to isolate valuable minerals. Instead, it was ground up and sorted with assay machines.

Studies have shown that unsmelted metals are not as harmful to people. This is one of the few points on which both the EPA and Triumph citizens agree.

It's also unclear whether excavating yards has health benefits, according to a \$17 million study of yard-removal actions in Boston, Baltimore and Cincinnati. In Cincinnati, for example, tests showed no evidence that soil and exterior dust abatement reduced blood lead levels, an EPA fact sheet reported. "Recontamination of exterior paved areas occurred within weeks of abatement," the report said.

In Triumph, residents argue that since blood-lead and arsenic-urine screenings showed no acute health prob-

Triumph: A great place to grow kids and fish

TRIUMPH, Idaho — Miners first moved into the valley of the East Fork of the Big Wood River in the 1880s. Three mines, the North Star, Courier and Lucky GI, were worked up three steep draws that feed into Triumph.

The Triumph Mine, which produced an estimated \$28 million of silver, zinc and lead from ore dug 1,000 feet below the earth's surface, lies on the north side of the East Fork Road, just across from the home of Donna Rose, an art dealer and abstract painter who moved to Triumph in 1989.

Rupert House, a 75-year-old Blaine County commissioner, worked in the Triumph Mine for 20 years. He and several partners bought the mine in the early 1970s with the hope of gleaning more value from the tailings.

Ore lifted out of the deep mine contained about 10 percent zinc per ton, 5 percent lead and less than 1 percent silver, he said.

House said zinc was used to galvanize iron products, lead was used in paint, batteries and gasoline, and silver was used for ornamental purposes and jewelry.

Like other Triumph residents, House doesn't mince words about the

proposed Superfund listing. "I think it's a bunch of bullshit," he said. "There's no way in hell that anyone could get contaminated at that site."

Many healthy people grew up in the Triumph area, including local football, basketball and track standouts, he said. "They used to swim in the (tailings) ponds and play in the water. They were the healthiest bunch of kids you ever saw."

Picabo Street, an alpine skier vying for a spot on the U.S. Olympic ski team, grew up in Triumph.

Veteran fly fisherman Grant Rember grew up in Triumph and says he's never suffered any adverse health effects.

"I grew up with my sister and brother at the edge of the tailings pond," he said. "I'm 77 and I'm still a healthy son of a gun."

Rember caught his first fish in the East Fork, a wild and colorful brook trout. "I can still see the sun gleaming on the side of that fish," he said. "When my wife Mary tells me to go get some fish for supper, I can still catch a limit in an hour or so ... Those fish are fat and healthy, and the river is just pure and clean."

Rember says he's never seen any mutated fish in the East Fork.

Two large tailings piles were left behind by the mines in Triumph — one consisting of coarse material just to the east of the Triumph Mine, and another pile to the west that contains more fine grains. The lower pile, situated in front of Rose's home across the street from the mine, has elevated berms of tailings ringing a pond.

Residents do not blame the old miners for leaving their waste in the middle of the valley. The Mining Law of 1872 had no requirements for cleaning up mine waste, and the Idaho Legislature did not adopt any mining reclamation laws until the mid-1980s.

But the situation in Triumph is not an isolated one in Idaho, where mining has played a major role in development and settlement. A report from the U.S. Bureau of Mines indicates that about 27,500 acres of land have been affected by hundreds of abandoned mines. An estimated \$1.5 million would be required to conduct a thorough inventory, and about \$315.6 million would be required to reclaim the sites, according to the bureau.

— S.S.

lem from heavy metals, there's no reason to dig up their yards.

But the EPA said in late September it may dig up a number of residential yards, garden plots or children's play areas, depending on whether families want the areas cleaned up. EPA on-site coordinator Chris Field said if families — particularly those with young children — do not want any of the contaminated areas cleaned up, the agency will back off.

"If we're not allowed access, we don't plan to fight anybody for access at this point," Field said. "We may do some limited fencing or posting of highly contaminated areas with signs. We want to help the people keep their children away from highly contaminated areas."

The EPA justified its decision based on a worst-case health threat of children making "mud pies" out of the most toxic dirt and eating it, said Roseanne Lorenzana, an EPA toxicologist and doctor of veterinary medicine.

Lorenzana said she gave EPA field supervisor Chris Field three scenarios from which to judge health risk: the mud pie situation, a child putting arsenic-laced dirt in a sandwich, and a person who breathed toxic dust for 30 years. Field picked the mud pie scenario, one that Heath says is "absurd."

If it occurred, however, Lorenzana said, "a child would get seriously ill."

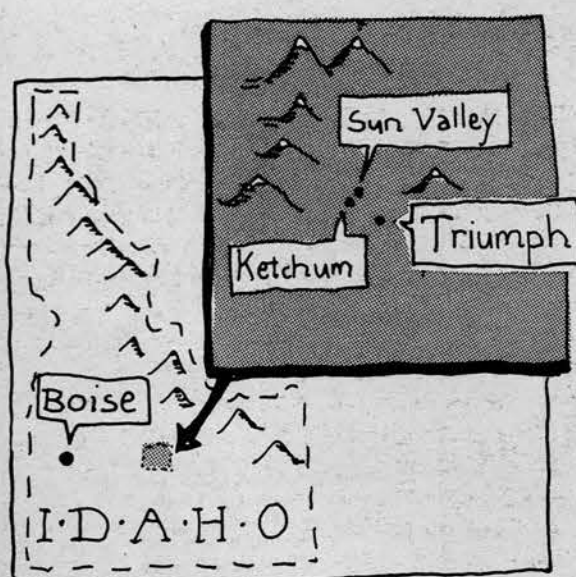
What frustrates Rose and Collins is that EPA's health risks are based on conservative probabilities.

Rose and Collins aren't concerned about 1 in 10 thousand to 1 in 1 million arsenic-induced cancer risks when faced with much higher risks of getting breast cancer or getting killed in an automobile accident. "I have a 1-in-9 chance of getting breast cancer, and I'm supposed to be concerned about a 1-in-1-million risk? That's ridiculous," Collins said.

For citizens to be living so close to the tailings piles, and on top of contaminated soil is "kind of like standing under a tree in a lightning storm," Bennett said. "If you stand under the tree, you might get struck by lightning or you might not, but why take the chance?"

At the request of Triumph residents, Rep. Mike Crapo, R-Idaho, sent INEL's Norrell to the site to get a better handle on soil and water tests. Norrell, who teaches a University of Idaho course in Idaho Falls on water testing, said the EPA's tests were conducted in a manner that was "completely oblivious to a highly mineralized zone."

For example, he said, the EPA's two



lead hits from Triumph's community well came from unfiltered samples mixed with nitric acid, so as to release lead from water-borne metal flakes and sediment. The high lead tests showed 85 and 83 parts per billion; the previous and subsequent samples showed lead level between 1 and 3 ppb.

If the EPA was going to apply nitric acid, the tests should have been filtered to first remove metal flakes and sediment, Norrell said.

The drinking water system filters out flakes and sediments routinely, so the test, in effect, produced an unrealistic, spiked result.

He said the test should have been tossed out. "They have never demonstrated that there was any lead that has been released."

EPA officials disagree. An unfiltered sample is appropriate because Triumph's well is unfiltered, Field said. Adding acid to a drinking water test is a standard EPA procedure, he said.

The EPA's Bennett also stands behind the tests. "They're doing nothing more than purposely falsifying the information," he said. "To hear that they're still talking about this 'spiked' test ... makes you a little mad."

Bennett claims the EPA's tests show that during spring snowmelt the water table becomes more contaminated with lead and zinc.

With the aid of other INEL scientists, Norrell has been poring over EPA soil tests. He discovered that soil samples in the Triumph area were compared to background soil samples away from the heavily mineralized area, a mistake in his view.

EPA officials stand behind their data. In the fall of 1991, shortly after the

EPA held its first meeting with Triumph residents about environmental and health concerns, Rose read an article in *The New Yorker* magazine about a similar situation in Aspen, Colo. As an environmentalist, she figured the people there must have been blind to the danger, so she flew to Aspen to have a look.

She discovered that citizens opposed the listing because no visible health threat existed, and their water supply tested clean except for a slight reading of cadmium. The EPA maintained the cadmium

level justified a Superfund listing.

Rose finds many similarities between Aspen and Triumph. She has since joined the executive board of a new national group, Superfund Coalition Against Mismanagement. All the board members hail from communities targeted for Superfund listing: Leadville, Colo.; Midvale, Utah; Palmerton, Pa., and Granite City, Ill.

SCAM members say the EPA's priorities are mixed up. "The EPA Superfund program too often creates decades-long cleanup programs which are unworkable, unnecessary, ineffective and extremely costly," the coalition says. "Billions of dollars are skewed away from the environment and toward the legal industry."

Indeed, a number of General Accounting Office and Inspector General reports have blasted the EPA's Superfund program as one that has made attorneys rich while little has been accomplished in environmental cleanup over the program's 13-year history.

Rose and Collins say that fighting the EPA's proposed listing of Triumph has been exhausting. "This is ruining my whole summer, and I'm fighting for an extension of the public comment period so I can ruin my summer some more," Rose said.

But based on the offensive that Triumph residents have mounted, particularly with the aid of Crapo, INEL and Denver attorney Robert W. Lawrence, an expert in Superfund projects who has agreed to work for no charge, the citizens may have a chance to block a listing and work toward a quick solution.

Collins and Rose say their efforts may spare other communities, possibly other small mining towns in Idaho, the effort of fighting off the EPA. And their

TESTING FOR TOXICS

Source: Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, Office of Environmental Health

Subjects: 42 participants — 11 children and 31 adults

Blood-lead tests (Nov. 1991 and July 1992) — Lead levels ranged from 1 to 19 micrograms per deciliter of blood. No children in Triumph had levels greater than 10 mg/dl, the recommended level of concern. One man registered 19 mg/dl; residents say he is a welder and loads his own bullets.

Arsenic-urine tests (same dates, except a third test for six children was repeated in October 1992) — Arsenic levels ranged from the level of detection to 50 micrograms of speciated arsenic per gram of creatinine (protein). The level of concern in the workplace is 50 mg/g; levels of 10-15 mg/g are considered normal background.

State health officials said the arsenic levels increased by a statistically significant margin between November 1991 and July 1992, possibly because more exposure could occur in the summer when the tailings are not capped by snow.

town may be used as a key reason why the Superfund program should be reformed.

"Sometimes I feel like it's not worth it, and I'll give in," Collins said. "But we've come too far to stop now. We're going to go all the way." ■

Steve Stuebner writes in Boise, Idaho.

The comment deadline on the proposed Superfund listing for Triumph ended on Aug. 9, but late comments may be considered. Write Docket Coordinator, Headquarters, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, CERCLA docket office (OS-245), 401 M. St. SW, Washington, DC 20460. Comments should contain an original and three copies.

For more information, call David Bennett, Region 10 National Priority List coordinator, (206/553-2103) or Triumph resident Donna Rose, Box 3730, Ketchum, ID 83340 (208/788-9300).

State of Idaho wants to lead the cleanup drive at Triumph

Three parties have been identified so far to pay for cleaning up the legacy of 110 years of mining in the Triumph area: the Idaho Lands Department, which owns 20 acres of the lower tailings pile; Asarco Inc., a large mining company with holdings throughout the West; and Triumph Minerals Inc., a group of local people who hope to rework the tailings someday.

In late June, the state Lands Department voted to take the lead in a fast-track cleanup of the Triumph site, based on the advice of two companies that tried — and failed — to fight the Superfund listing.

"The Superfund process is not rational. We spent \$30 million at Bunker Hill learning this lesson," said William T. Russell, general counsel for Pintlar Corp., parent company of Gulf

Environmental in Kellogg.

Officials estimate that cleanup could cost \$5 million to \$10 million if the fast-track approach works.

The EPA has spent about \$285,000 at the site so far. A comprehensive cleanup of mine waste could cost hundreds of millions, according to the EPA.

Residents fear the worst. "A total cleanup would probably ruin us," Wendy Collins said. "They'd probably end up condemning our homes, and we'd have to leave. That's why we keep screaming. I mean, this is our life."

Right now, without any money earmarked for Triumph, the state Land Board cannot move ahead. Jerry Evans, state superintendent of public schools and a Land Board member, said legislators ought to search for funds to pay the

state's share. "I'm not about to tap into the school endowment fund to pay this bill," he said.

State Sen. Laird Noh, R-Kimberly, a sheep rancher and chairman of the Senate Resources and Environment Committee, said legislators are searching for funds now. About \$250,000 may be needed this summer to cover tailings piles with clean dirt, pave or seal several gravel driveways and develop a long-term cleanup plan.

"I'm quite optimistic," Noh said. "I expect the Legislature will be supportive of keeping the cleanup under state control."

The state closed out its 1992-93 budget year with an extra \$5 million for public schools and nearly \$10.7 million in an uncommitted cash surplus, said

State Auditor J.D. Williams.

The windfall for education had been expected, but the cash surplus was twice what economists had predicted in June. Williams said it reflects the strength of the state economy.

Meanwhile, the EPA is poised to send bulldozers into Triumph to begin excavating several yards with high levels of arsenic. Donna Rose claims the emergency action is motivated by EPA officials who need to save face rather than by any true threat to public health.

"If they send in the bulldozers, our community is 100 percent united that we won't let them dig up our yards," she said. "I'll be the first one to chain myself to a bulldozer and say, 'Over my dead body.'"

— S.S.

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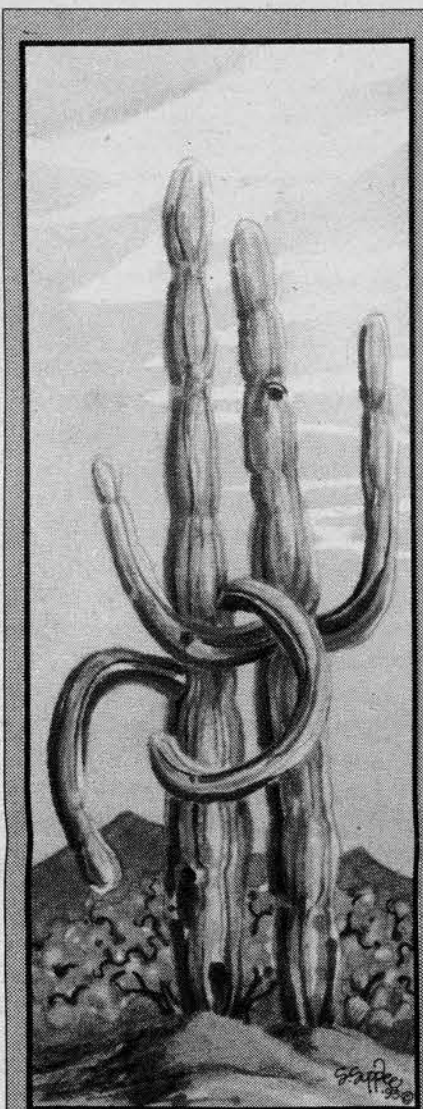
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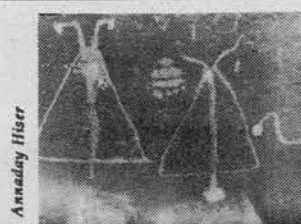
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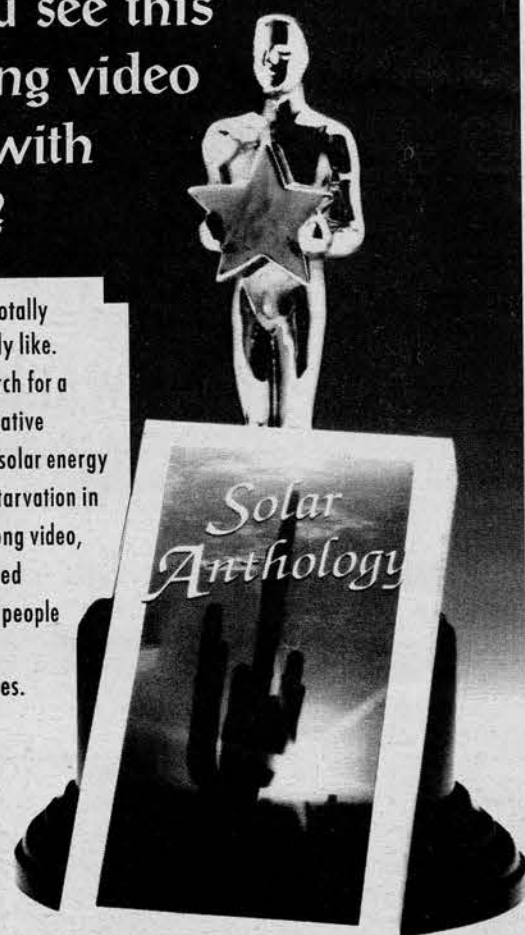
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by Ed Marston

Twenty years of proximity have led me to see the Gunnison National Forest in west-central Colorado as a rogue outfit. I first saw roguishness in 1982, when it did an environmental impact statement to justify construction of a molybdenum mine by AMAX.

The EIS was shameless and contemptuous of the public, spurning the very idea of intelligent analysis. It said the mine would be economic even though the price of moly was in the cellar (and stayed there, forcing AMAX to abandon the project after it got its permits). The EIS said building a powerline through a scenic corridor would eliminate the need to build a powerline later, thus creating the concept of "pre-emptive impact." And it paid mocking lip service to the Antiquities Act by saying that the 155 million tons of tailings to be dumped in a scenic valley would preserve and protect that valley's archaeological sites by burying them.

Even AMAX was embarrassed. But the then-supervisor of the Gunnison, an old-school forester named Jimmy Wilkins, couldn't have been prouder. People outside the agency may be critical, he said, but he'd gotten lots of praise "in-service."

I've since learned that to many agency employees "in-service" counts for everything, and outsiders — the public, other agencies, the forces of nature — count for nothing. Jimmy Wilkins and his forest were marching to a drum I couldn't hear — a drum I naively hadn't realized existed.

Wilkins retired shortly after the EIS. With mining and oil and gas dead, his successor concentrated on enticing Louisiana-Pacific to build a mill to process the aspen trees that were clogging the forest. To justify massive roading and logging, Ray Evans warned the public that spruce-fir would take over aspen stands unless they were "rejuvenated" through clearcutting. What was the problem with spruce-fir invasion? Agency research had shown that spruce-fir don't turn red in the fall, so a spruce-fir takeover would spell the end of fall Color Sunday drives. To save Color Sunday for posterity, the Forest Service needed to log aspen.

No doubt this reasoning was treated with great respect in-service, but towns and counties throughout west-central Colorado were so enraged that a new forest supervisor was brought in to redo the plan.

While the faces changed, the march to an in-service tempo continued. The latest supervisor, Robert Storch, has just proposed oil and gas leasing for almost every square foot of the forest. Even though a series of court cases out of the northern Rockies has ordered the

It's time to clearcut the Forest Service

agency to do comprehensive planning before leasing, the Gunnison forest proposes, to take a particularly spectacular piece of malfeasance, to lease the geologically unstable area containing the springs that supply drinking water to the town of Paonia.

The Gunnison also commits sins of omission. The forest's jewel is the West Elk Wilderness. But the Gunnison has failed to clear deadfall across most of the

OPINION

West Elk's trails. When hikers and riders encounter a trail blocked by a fallen tree, they pick their way around it, creating a new trail. Some trails have been neglected for decades, and now consist of a rat's maze of parallel, eroding ribbons of dirt.

One "trail" is kept clear, however: the Beckwith Stockway to Swampy Pass — a 15-to 20-foot wide, eroding cattle road paved with urine and cowpits that makes its four-mile way up, over and down a steep ridge. That ugly, destructive, linear clearcut has destroyed small drainages and makes a mockery of multiple use, let alone of wilderness.

So long as I only looked at the Gunnison, it seemed a rogue forest. But *High Country News* covers many national forests. And from that broader perspective, the Gunnison is not unique. It is a perfectly average, conforming part of the U.S. Forest Service. If I lived near Arizona's Coconino or Prescott national forests, I would be outraged by inappropriate land trades and recreation development. If I lived near Wyoming's Thunder Basin National Grassland, administered by the Medicine Bow National Forest, I would be incredulous at a land trade that every public official, including Gov. Mike Sullivan, and most local people oppose, except for the Forest Service and the man who initiated the trade. And so the trade is going ahead.

People in the Northwest are near forests the agency has devastated ecologically even as it allowed some logging companies to steal trees. Forest Service Chief Dale Robertson's excuse for not stopping the thefts is that efforts to switch to a new system have met with "significant resistance" in the West. So here's an agency that can't stop theft because the thieves have too much influence over it.

Robertson, so colorless out-service he is almost transparent, is a tiger "in-service," as shown by the forced resignation of Northern Rockies Regional Forester John Mumma. In addition, nine of the 13 Northern Region forest supervisors who signed a letter in 1989 saying the agency had lost its sense of mission are gone. Instead of taking the letter as loyal criticism, Forest Service brass treated it as treason. Rather than reform, the agency went to the mattresses.

Forestry professor James Kennedy of Utah State University, who is both a critic and fan of the Forest Service, says its staff can be divided into "cats" and "dogs." The "cats" show loyalty to their disciplines. The "dogs" show loyalty to the organization.

Kennedy's distinction recalls

the old question: What does the earth rest on? The answer: a giant turtle. And below the giant turtle? Another turtle. In fact, the joke goes, it's turtles all the way down.

And in the Forest Service? It's dogs much of the way down and all the way up. As the ousters in the northern Rockies show, there are those who put mission above the organization. But especially at and near the top, it is almost all dogs. Robertson gives his loyalty to the Western senators, who in turn are loyal dogs to the mining, logging and oil and gas industries.

Over the long term, dog-like organizations aren't much good to anyone. Because no one trusts the Forest Service, we can't solve land-based problems. We see this with Clinton science-based Option Nine approach to old-growth timber. It may be an excellent plan, but it is in trouble because no one trusts the Forest Service to administer science-based policy.

Environmentalists want no-logging preserves rather than mixed-use areas because we know the Forest Service can't implement a policy that requires good science and ecological integrity.

The scientists and administrators who worked on Option Nine, like those who worked on grazing reform, are wasting their time and avoiding the real job, which is agency reform.

Of course Robertson needs to be replaced with someone the agency would never choose. When the agency chose Robertson to replace Max Peterson instead of choosing a reformer, it lost its last chance to control its destiny. But a reform minded chief is not enough. We need a land management agency made up of people who will fight to protect the ground, and then noisily resign if thwarted from above.

But the agency rejects those loyal to the ground. In summer 1990, I spoke to the Rocky Mountain Region's forest supervisors and staff members about Don Oman, the Twin Falls, Idaho, district ranger who ran afoul of his agency by attempting to control his grazing permittees. I said that if Oman were to work for a supportive forest supervisor, he would make an excellent ranger, given his courage and determination to improve the land.

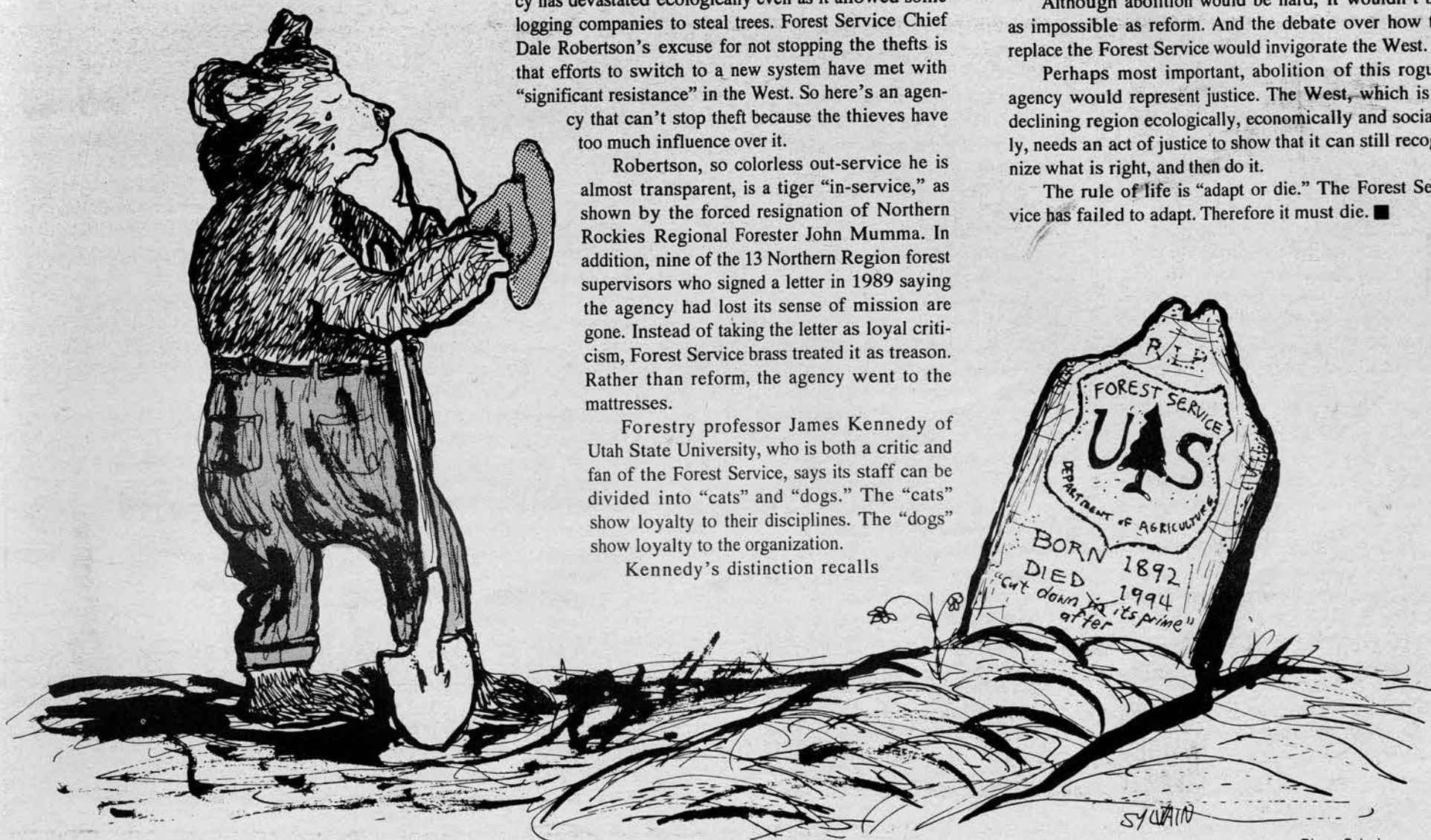
The reaction was embarrassed silence, as if I'd given the talk with my fly unzipped. To the audience, Don Oman was an outcast. They couldn't understand that a person could be a good member of the Forest Service and yet also fight publicly to change it.

The Forest Service is beyond redemption, and should be abolished. It would not be a huge loss. There is little institutional or human memory in the agency, given the frequency with which employees are transferred, given how the agency has isolated itself from the ground and from communities, and given its contempt for science.

Although abolition would be hard, it wouldn't be as impossible as reform. And the debate over how to replace the Forest Service would invigorate the West.

Perhaps most important, abolition of this rogue agency would represent justice. The West, which is a declining region ecologically, economically and socially, needs an act of justice to show that it can still recognize what is right, and then do it.

The rule of life is "adapt or die." The Forest Service has failed to adapt. Therefore it must die. ■



Diane Sylvain

BULLETIN BOARD

CAPITAL OF THE THIRD WORLD

Los Angeles is the dog that wags the rural, inland West. The Southland, as the *LA Times* calls Greater Los Angeles, focuses its attention on the Pacific Rim. But its most casual moves roil the lives of its neighbors to the north and east. That is especially true today, as relatively large numbers of Southlanders flee a region their parents had fled to. *Los Angeles: Capital of the Third World* by David Rieff provides a perspective on the region for those who do not live there. It is Rieff's thesis that loss of control of our national borders, abetted by LA's desire for cheap domestic and commercial help, has turned the Southland into a Third World nation. His LA sounds much like South Africa, with unrestrained immigration providing the middle class with gardeners and maids and business people with docile workers. Among the victims, Rieff writes, are LA's public schools, where teachers spend all their time teaching English to youngsters who speak scores of different languages, and black Americans, who cannot compete with the new immigrants' willingness to work for nearly nothing under terrible conditions. The book is an extended argument with those who think this latest wave of immigration will be assimilated like the one that swamped the nation in the 1900s. The author, a New Yorker, barely restrains his irritation with white Angelenos' la-la attitude, which assumes, from the safety of West LA, that everything will work out for the best.

Simon and Schuster, New York, 1991.
\$12 paper. 276 pages.

— Ed Marston

RUINOUS ROADS

The Department of Interior is writing new rules to interpret a 19th century mining law that allows developers to turn two-tracks and trails into roads. A report to Congress issued by the agency in June says the rules will help resolve the controversy surrounding Revised Statute 2477, a provision of an 1866 mining law. The 20-word law was originally intended to give miners access across public lands to their claims. In 1976, Congress repealed the law but grandfathered in pre-existing claims. Now, pro-development states and counties are using the law to claim rights-of-way for thousands of miles of roads, tracks and trails, some of which cut through wilderness areas and national parks. The 180-page report, which outlines the history, status, impacts and alternatives to R.S. 2477, says rulemaking will focus on defining highways and valid existing rights under the law. In an introduction, Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt says that while the courts will ultimately decide many of the issues presented by R.S. 2477, his agency's rules will lay important groundwork for future legal battles. A draft rule is expected in January of 1994. To obtain a copy of the *Report to Congress on R.S. 2477: The History and Management of R.S. 2477 Rights-of-Way Claims on Federal and Other Lands*, contact Ted Stephenson of the Bureau of Land Management's Utah State Office, P.O. Box 45155, Salt Lake City, UT 84145-0155 (801/539-4100).

RESTARTING THE HART

After over 100 years of intensive cattle grazing, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service wants to remove all livestock from the Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge in southern Oregon. A Draft Environmental Impact Statement released in August calls for a 15-year "ecosystem management" restoration program to revive the 278,000-acre refuge, including prescribed burns, building rock check dams in streams, eliminating livestock, and developing a permit system for backcountry camping. The draft EIS also recommends studying 55,000 acres for protection as wilderness or research natural areas, closing roads in sensitive areas, and building three new campgrounds to handle the growing number of visitors. Agency officials say the plan offers the most benefits to wildlife of the five alternatives studied, but warn that it may take a century to fully restore soils, native plant communities and wildlife (*HCN*, 6/28/93). The public comment period runs until Oct. 12. For a copy of the DEIS contact Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge, Barry Reiswig, Manager, P.O. Box 111, Lakeview, OR 97630 (503/947-3315).

FUTURE FORESTS IN WYOMING

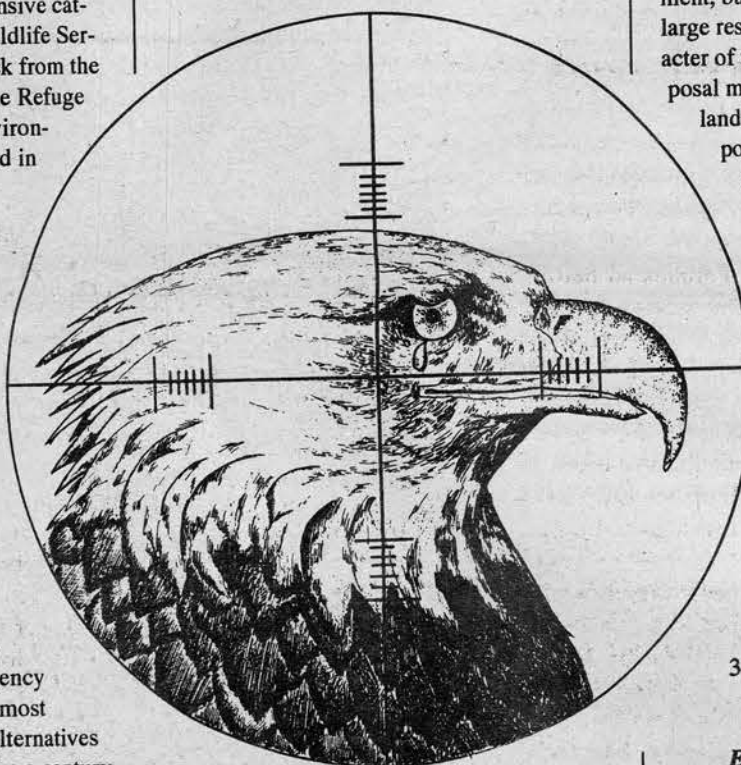
An annual conservation congress in Wyoming, sponsored by 15 groups, will focus on "Our Forests, Our Future" Oct. 1-3 in Casper. The congress will encourage people to become more involved in logging and other decisions affecting national forests, teach how to be more effective forest advocates, and foster networking among the different groups. Keynote speaker is environmental patriarch David Brower; other speakers include Tom Bell, the founder of *High Country News* and the Wyoming Outdoor Council, John Mumma, who served 30 years in the U.S. Forest Service before retiring to avoid a forced transfer, and Henry Carey, executive director of the Forest Trust. Wyoming Conservation Network, C/O Wyoming Outdoor Council, 201 Main St., Lander, WY 82520 (307/332-7031).



J. MacDonald

UNSETTLING THE WEST

Regional thinkers will join voices in Gunnison, Colo., at the fourth annual Headwaters conference Sept. 23-26. "Reinventing, Reinvesting, and Reinhabiting the Headwaters" will explore issues of Western culture and colonization and include talks by journalists, historians, writers and community leaders of the area. Audience participation is a must. For information contact George Sibley at the Headwaters Project, Western State College of Colorado, Gunnison, CO 81231 (303/943-2055/2025).



Jim Stiles

AILING ECOSYSTEMS

Does the Endangered Species Act work? Does it protect plants and animals from extinction? In *Beyond the Endangered Species Act: Conservation in the 21st Century*, former government biologist Mark Shaffer says the 20-year-old law is essential but not nearly enough. To take the law a step further, Shaffer proposes an approach that would protect entire ecosystems. Natural areas from national parks to local greenbelts would be woven into a single continuous network he calls "life-lands." He says the issue is not protecting an endangered species such as the spotted owl at the expense of jobs, but whether we will allow our environment to continue supporting all of us. What endangered species really tell us, he says, is that ecosystems are ailing and natural habitats are being wiped out. *Beyond the Endangered Species Act: Conservation in the 21st Century* is available from The Wilderness Society, 900 17 St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006-2596 (202/833-2300).

— Ernie Atencio

GOULD GROUP GEARS UP

A group forming in rural Gould, Colo., wants to stop California developer Fred Sauer from opening a ski resort in a nearby state forest. The proposed site involves about 4,500 acres on Seven Utes Mountain, 62 miles west of Fort Collins. Don Ewy, a self-employed logger and organizer of the group, has assembled a coalition of loggers, ranchers, summer residents and environmentalists to fight the resort. "I think the only way to beat this," says Ewy, "is with a really good mixture of people." Some residents favor the plan because it would bring economic development, but Ewy fears the construction of a large resort would forever change the character of the area. He also believes the proposal may be illegal. Sale of state trust land is prohibited, but because the proposal involves a land exchange rather than a sale, Land Board Commissioner Lucy Black Creighton says "the issue is open to legal interpretation." Nonetheless, she says the board has agreed to seek a variance from the state legislature to permit an exchange for 1,200 acres. Revenues generated from State Trust Lands are used to benefit public schools. For information, contact Don and Ann Ewy, Star Rte. Box 109, Walden, CO 80480, 303/723-4316, or Land Commissioner Lucy Black Creighton, 303/866-3454.

— David Frey

ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM CONFERENCE

Links between pollution and poverty are the focus of a conference Sept. 28-Oct. 3 at the University of Colorado at Boulder. "Toward a New Direction: Social Justice, Race and the Environment" will look at the impact of pollution and how it varies depending on race, nationality and income. The keynote speaker is Winona LaDuke, president of the Indigenous Women's Network. The student-organized event will also examine the role of race in such issues as land and water rights, and women in the environmental movement. The conference is free; for more information contact the Environmental Center, University of Colorado at Boulder, UMC 331, Campus Box 207, Boulder, CO 80302-0207 (303/492-8308).



Stone Container cuts a wide swath

essay by Edward Smith

The closing of the sawmill here in Flagstaff is well-timed to coincide with the listing of the Mexican spotted owl. The 100 or so workers who have suddenly seen their temporary layoffs become permanent must now come up with some other way to feed their families and pay their bills. And who are the culprits? Why, it's those damned enviro-emotionalists and the Forest Service goons.

Stone Forest Industries, which is a subsidiary of multinational giant Stone Container Corp., has once again manipulated the livelihood of its employees for political and economic gain.

Stone has tried to blame environmentalists and federal agencies for every change in forest management that has taken place over the past decade. They tried to use that scapegoat three years ago in Eagar, Ariz., at a dinner they hosted for the millworkers who were temporarily laid off. Some employees publicly ridiculed them, because they knew the real reason for shutting down the mill: retooling to get a better value-added product out of smaller diameter trees.

That was a smart fiscal decision and should have been done here in Flagstaff as well, but those in the boardroom in Chicago decided it would cost the stockholders too much money. Who is interested in community stability?

Now the truckers, loggers and other support industries must jockey for position to cut timber here and transport it longer distances to the mill in Eagar, near the White Mountains. The Coconino National Forest will still put up

In the woods, it cuts, runs and blames environmentalists

timber sales and timber will be harvested, although probably at lower levels than in previous years.

The timber industry is as much to blame as anybody for the shortfall. Over the past decades, through timber "management" practices known as high-grading, selective thinning, and overstory removal, timbering activities have left most areas lacking older, larger diameter trees and left us with many remaining areas that are too dense and unhealthy because, at the time, it was not "fiscally responsible" to thin those areas.

Large logs spell large and immediate profits, while smaller logs require more handling and a lower profit margin. So the fiscally responsible decision for the short term was to cut as many large trees as they could get away with, and then run.

Fortunately, we are starting to realize that for true community stability, fiscal responsibility extends well into the future, beyond the myopic profit-taking viewpoint that has dominated corporate America for the past century or more. We have realized that only when we have a functioning ecosystem that cleans our air, water and soil, and that refreshes our souls, calms our minds and strengthens our bodies will we have true community stability. Only then can we afford to cut wood to warm us, cover us and make paper to write on.

The Forest Service is walking a difficult line in meet-

ing these objectives, but I think they are right in scaling back activities so we can assess what we have, take inventory of what is missing, and then carefully proceed with a plan that contributes to the widest range possible of community stability, both human and non-human.

It is sad to see workers losing their jobs, and it is up to the community of Flagstaff and other towns to try to reabsorb these displaced workers. But just as the Department of Defense has had to reduce its work force by thousands in response to a decrease in need for a worldwide military presence, some of our local industries are bound to be affected by an adjustment of our land management practices. We are moving away from commodity production as the driving force on our public lands, whether mining, timbering or grazing, but not eliminating them altogether. We are starting to realize the importance of striking a balance among all the various users of public lands and making sure that one user's special interests do not overrun the interests of another.

Taking care of forests means timber harvest, but not utilizing the rapacious methods of the past. It is obvious that we have been gluttons for the largest, most valuable trees; valuable not only for the pockets of Mr. Stone and his stockholders, but for the myriad of wildlife that makes this area so attractive and fulfilling for its residents and alluring to visitors. Now we must pick up the pieces of what remains and make those pieces fit into a puzzle that is our future. ■

Edward Smith is a first-year graduate student in the biology department at Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff.

essay by Darrell Geist

The financial shenanigans that characterized the 1980s — corporate raiding, insider trading, junk-bond debt — still haunt the American West. Perhaps no better example exists than Chicago-based Stone Container. Once a small, family-owned pulp business, Stone grew into a Fortune 500 company by the end of the 1980s.

Working with Michael Milken, the junk-bond dealer recently released from jail, and the now-defunct Wall Street financial giant Drexel Burnham Lambert, Stone made 11 acquisitions of forest land and mills from 1982 to 1987.

As a result, the company's net sales increased 13-fold: from \$411 million in 1981 to \$5.4 billion in 1991; on paper, profits were over \$1.2 billion. By 1992, Stone had 68 subsidiaries, ownership in 26 non-consolidated companies, and 218 manufacturing facilities and sales offices throughout Europe, the Far East, the Caribbean and the Americas.

The family heir and chief executive officer, Roger Stone, declared triumphantly to shareholders in 1992 that Stone Container had become "a world-class global paper and packaging company ... through internal expansion, acquisition" and by "lowering our cost structure through increased productivity."

What Roger Stone failed to say was that the company had achieved "world-class" status by piling up \$4.1 billion in debt. To service that debt, Stone has cut costs wherever it could.

With facilities worldwide, accidents are bound to happen. But Stone's workplace safety record indicates that some accidents could have been prevented.

For example, three workers have been crushed to death at Stone's Jonesboro, La., mill since 1991 as a result of the company's failure to install controls on two paper-winder machines — in violation of federal regulations — so they could not be turned on during maintenance.

From 1986 to 1991, during the lax Reagan-Bush years, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) cited Stone 706 times for worker safety and health violations.

All 12 "willful violations" of OSHA standards — in which the company showed "intentional disregard" for the health and safety of its workers — were committed at Stone's Frenchtown, Mont., mill. In May 1991, a boiler explosion at the mill killed Larry LaCasse and injured three other workers. Stone

Financially, it grew too fast and is now sinking (like a stone)

declared a pre-tax gain of \$17.5 million as a result of the Frenchtown boiler's "involuntary conversion."

Stone's "intentional disregard" for people extends to land it controls or influences. Through a "land assistance program" with private landowners the company controls 11.8 million acres of forests in Canada and 1.7 million acres in the United States. Stone provides landowners with forest management services, and the landowners, in turn, provide timber. The company also owns 14,000 acres of private fee timber in the United States and 343,000 acres in Canada, feeding 18 mills in North America, according to documents filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

A company brochure spells out how the land Stone owns and manages is run: "Young, healthy and growing forests generally do a better job for the environment than older ones because the growing process causes the absorption of carbon dioxide."

The result of this simplistic corporate attitude toward old-growth forest ecosystems has led environmentalists to lock horns with Stone in the San Juan National Forest of Colorado, where activists have been trying for several years to prevent the cutting of the Sand Bench old-growth forest (HCN, 2/24/92).

Sandy Shea of Ancient Forest Rescue, a Boulder-based group which is attempting to protect Colorado's old growth, says:

"They continue to take timber way out of proportion to what's left. Stone is the last in a long list of multinationals to cut the remaining 5 percent of Colorado's old-growth forests."

Shea says Stone is cutting the old growth to help pay off its corporate debts. "Unfortunately, it's the classic liquidation mentality: Maximize the take from the forest, get it while you can, then lay people off."

Despite Stone's willingness to neglect its workers' well-being and reduce company-owned or managed forests and Forest Service timber leases to stumps, it is not succeeding financially. On April 8, 1993, market investors became skittish of Stone's massive debt, dumped their shares and drove the company's stock to a historic low of \$6 a share. In 1987 and 1988, Stone stock reached \$39; it now hovers near \$8 a share.

Weeks after the April 8 decline, Stone was forced

to "postpone" a \$500 million stock sale and a related \$300 million debt offering because of "perceived liquidity" problems from banks and financial investors.

Reports of Stone's worsening financial condition and possible bankruptcy have begun to circulate in the financial world. The April 27 *Wall Street Journal* reported:

"Some analysts feel a reorganization in or out of bankruptcy court is likely," and that "shareholders could end up using their stock certificates as scrap paper."

In May 1993, Roger Stone, chief architect of Stone's acquisitions, announced that Canadian assets would be sold to pay creditors and fend off bankruptcy. Like a Monopoly player who bought too many railroads and hotels, Stone has a lot to sell off. Some of its corporate assets acquired in the 1980s include the following:

Continental Groups forest products division in 1983 for \$509 million; Champion's brown paper business in 1986 for \$426 million; Southwest Forest Industries for \$787 million in 1987; and in 1989, Consolidated Bathurst, a Canadian newsprint giant for \$2.7 billion. Later in 1989, Stone also acquired a 49 percent share in Empaques de Carton Titan, one of Mexico's largest makers of corrugated container and molded cellulose products.

Now faced with billions of dollars of debt, and no Michael Milken or Drexel Burnham Lambert to refinance its high-risk endeavors, Stone is likely to use environmentalists and national environmental laws like the Endangered Species Act as scapegoats for their corporate mindset of growth at any cost.

The cost of that mindset will be felt in hundreds of communities and tens of thousands of households around the world from Flagstaff, Ariz., to Bathurst, New Brunswick. Dara O'Rourke of the Seattle-based Task Force on Multinational Resource Corporations, says the company's "junk-bond debt has caused Stone to shut down facilities, close small businesses and sell off assets to shore up its (core) U.S. businesses."

Fast money, a corporate takeover mentality and greed lured Stone into a high-finance world from which it — and its conquered firms, communities and forests — may not be able to escape. Sandy Shea of Ancient Forest Rescue predicts, "Stone comes from a wasteful era. They will go by the wayside." ■

Darrell Geist is a journalist for Cold Mountain, Cold Rivers, a grass-roots media group in Missoula, Montana.

essay by Ray Ring

TUCSON, Ariz. — I write from my desk in southern Arizona, feeling more besieged than usual. The dreaded killer bees are somewhere outside, getting closer. Any moment now I'll be forced into a confrontation of species. One false move or imagined insult from me, these bees will be trying to tattoo their nickname on my face.

And there is absolutely no help. All the bureaucrats and scientists from Brazil on north couldn't halt the advance of the invaders. The U.S. border fell and in July killer bees stung to death the first tax-paying American, or anyway a Texan. Now Arizona is the front. The leading swarms penetrated my range, Tucson, a few weeks ago, stinging whatever gets in their way. Already several people hereabouts have been attacked, and this bulletin just in: a poodle succumbed after suffering 150 stings.

Two stunned-looking guys told a good killer-bee story on the local TV news: They'd been feeling beeproof in their pickup truck, armored by tons of Detroit steel and three-layer safety glass, as they checked out a hot spot where a swarm of killer bees had done some stinging hours earlier. But buzzzzz, the swarm rose up and attacked the pickup, thousands of hard little insect bodies beating against all that steel and glass, some even crawling through a vent to get at the prize trapped inside the cab, irresistible human flesh.

Stuff of horror movies.

Pay attention, because as the killer bees press on northward, it's likely that what we're dealing with down here will be flying in your direction. Killer bees go for your eyes and head. They know where you and your pickup are vulnerable. They attack all at once and seemingly without provocation, and will chase you for half a mile; if you jump in a pond or swimming pool, they'll hang around and wait for you to come up for air. They hold a grudge and will even swarm the ambulance (another true story) that evacuates what's left of you. These bees have nerve. They don't hide out in the boonies like other raiders. They come right into town in broad daylight. They will occupy all the appealing territory, as high as 8,000 feet elevation, the best ZIP codes and country clubs and the most exclusive resorts and golf courses.

Tucson's traditional power structure — human, I mean — is feverishly trying to head off panic and the consequential plummet in real estate prices. By broadcast and newspaper, officials push a fact that is supposed to be reassuring: Sure, these bees will come at me like no others ever did, but technically their stingers have no special potency, unless I'm allergic or have a weak heart.

Good news: to be actually killed I'd have to be stung 1,870 times. (To calculate your maximum tolerance for killer-bee stings, multiply your weight times 10.) And just how was this particular statistic reached? I imagine a hapless victim about my size who suffered merely 1,679 killer-bee stings and went on to some version of life, in the throes of a post-traumatic stress for which no support groups yet exist. And somebody else who suffered 1,894 stings didn't make it? There are always exceptions, like the hardy guy in Africa, home continent of the killers, who survived (yet another true story) 2,243 stings. Pardon me for asking, just what is the method for tallying bee stings so precisely

because the killer bees will take over them as well, and put vinegar in the birdbath and the dog dish so thirsty bees won't get lured in. I better be on guard when operating a lawn mower or weedeater or tractor or chainsaw, because the noise will rile any bees within earshot. And to make sure I don't get mistaken for a skunk or bear out to pillage the nearest beehive, I should never wear any dark-colored or fuzzy clothes or leather; temps have been in the triple-digits all summer but I should stick to long pants and smooth white socks. Of course no shampoos or skin moisturizers that are the least bit perfumed and no shiny jewelry; only a fool would go around resembling a flower in need of pollination. And in this skin cancer capital, from now on I should think twice about using sunscreen lotions that smell good.

No, no difference at all.

Likely it will happen while I'm hiking the desert, which used to be a big pleasure for me in the old days, BKB (Before Killer Bees). The bottom line from experts: If I'm swarmed, my best strategy is to flee. I should just wrap my head and eyes with my arms, abandon dignity and run as fast as I can. Bug sprays or flailing will only make the bees madder, and any bee I do smash will diabolically release a chemical that summons more bees to the attack. All I do is run a zigzag course through high brush, if I can find any. Make a dash for the nearest house or vehicle, how many miles away?

On a hike last weekend, I was disconcerted by some unidentified bee that kept buzzing around me and bumping against my shoulder. Only later did I realize my daypack is old technology, it has a chrome-steel buckle on the shoulder strap that must've been shining like crazy and luring in this bee, which I guess didn't happen to be a killer. But as more killers invade, displacing and genetically dominating native bees, the odds will go against me.

I tell myself anything that attacks a poodle or a lawn mower can't be all bad. Don't we desert humans already coexist with other lethal creatures like scorpions and rattlers?

But these killer bees seem to be a new order of magnitude; they're determined and they don't mind their own business.

I have friends who live in the northern Rockies and are always bragging about how complete they feel, hiking and living in an ecosystem where creatures like grizzly bears still exist that will eat a person. Now I say, hey, down here we've got our own mini-grizzlies shuffling the food chain around and wanting to move right into my house. It's a new wilderness. ■

Ray Ring toughs it out in Tucson, Arizona.

KILLER BEES



Diane Sylvain

Anything that attacks a poodle or a lawn mower can't be all bad

when the total — and the swelling — gets so huge?

The government, the experts and smooth-talkers on the payroll, would like me to believe that killer bees will really make no difference. All we have to do, they tell us, is take a few simple precautions.

From now on, I should never approach any bee, no matter how harmless it acts; I should go the other way, but slowly, because any fast motion, even hard breathing, could upset a killer bee. And I must initiate a regular defensive patrol of the perimeters of my house and yard, caulking every tiny crevice in the eaves and removing any old empty flower pot or lumber pile in which bees might nest. I should toss out the birdhouses